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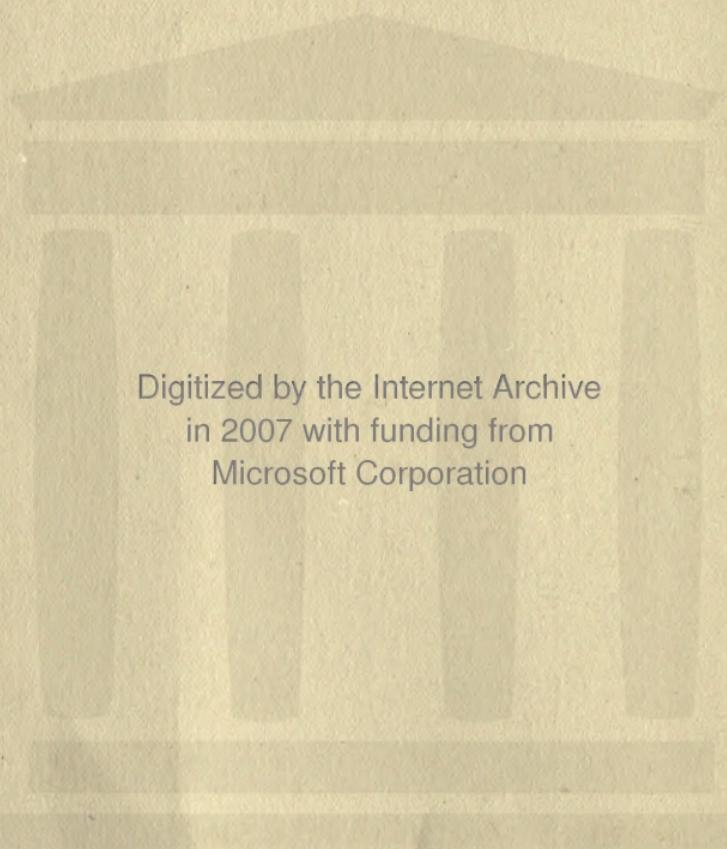
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For Olivia Howard Dunbar
with the love of

Louise Morgan Sill

April 4, 1906

IN SUN OR SHADE



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IN SUN OR SHADE

POEMS

BY

LOUISE MORGAN SILL



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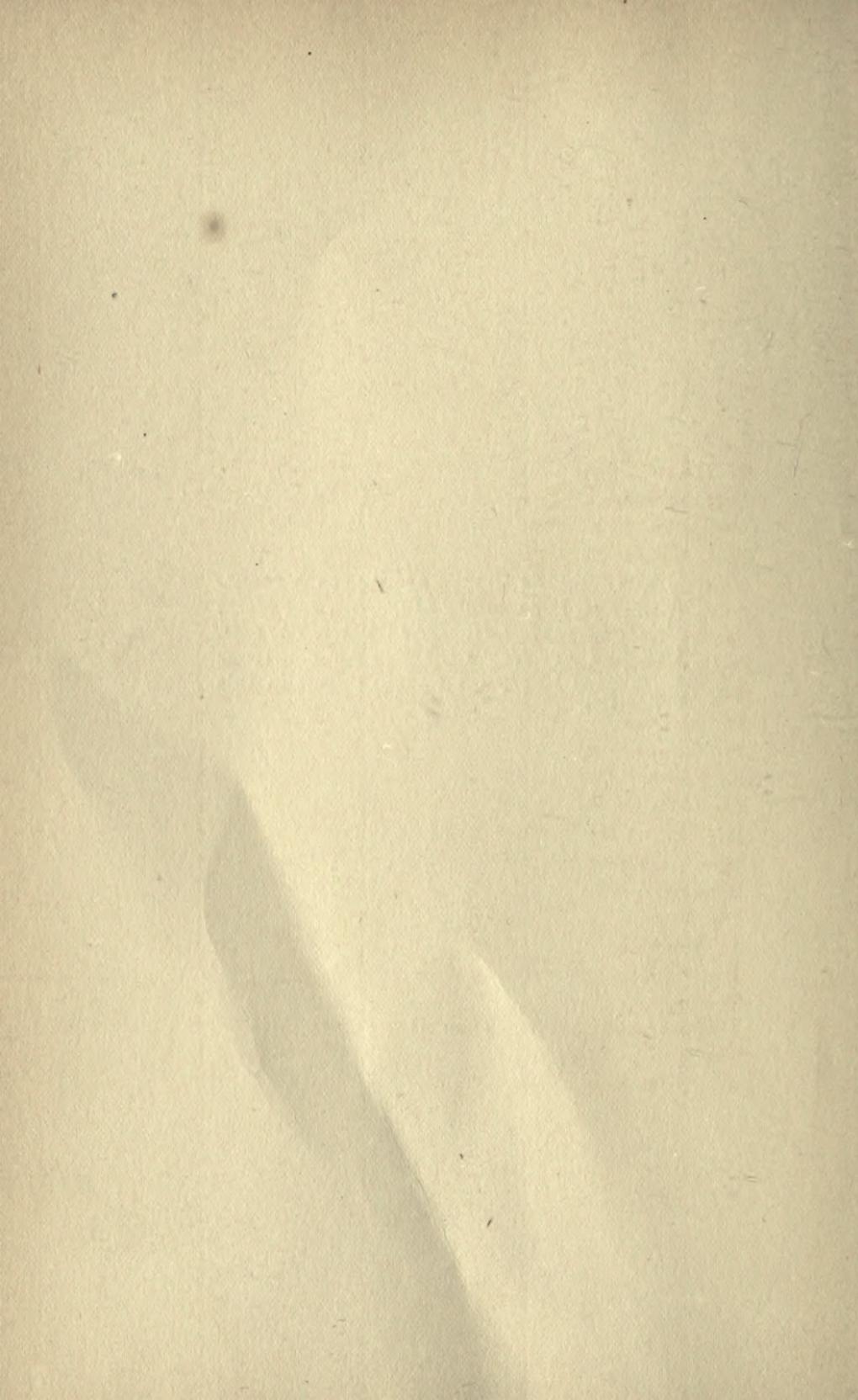


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IN SUN OR SHADE



Go, as a flight of birds,
Verses a heart has made
Haply in sun or shade—
Though you will make no stir
Of wing-beats in the blue,
No sigh, or laugh, or moan,
Save in those souls alone
Who laugh and weep with you.

In Verona

Soft air, soft fountains, warmed with sun
And thrilling to their overflow,
Where red and white the marbles gleam,
And mould'ring lions crouch and dream
Of deeds forgotten long ago.

And near lived Juliet—passionate
With love and sorrow—neither child
Nor woman, beautiful and doomed. . . .
What showers of almond-buds have bloomed
Since love that loyal soul beguiled !

Now, where she dwelt, gay dancers turn
With tripping steps to a guitar,
Oblivious of the spirit sweet
Who haunts the garden and the street,
Or trims her lamp in yonder star.

Yet what are marbles, rich and worn,
And what is all Verona's pride
Of pompous power and holy art,
To that enraptured, tragic heart
That lived for love and for love died ?

Lilt of guitar and fountain's song,
Your music haunts me, and the breath
Of almond-blossoms brings to me
Verona's fragrant memory
Of love that died and smiled at death.

The Butterfly

A Reading of Grieg's "Papillon"
(To L. W. A.)

Fluttering, springing,

Poising, and flinging

Wings of black and of brown and yellow;

In shade and gloom,

In the sunshine mellow,

On blossom and bloom;

Now here, now there,

On earth, in air;

Wildly lost in delirious motion,

Changeful as ocean;

Drunk with the frightful,

Subtly delightful spirit of Life;

Laughing in strife

Of tiniest muscles with zephyr and swirl

Of warm sweet air—

And the roses above and below in a whirl

Of roses everywhere.

Oh, the rapture of it all!—
The breezes under and over,
And the honey-reeking clover,
And the bees' narcotic call.

For lies there some keen nerve
In a butterfly's vibrant wing
That thrills to everything—
That bends to the faintest swerve
Of the outermost current of air
Flowing through untold space
To his infinitesimal place,
That he may rejoice in it there—
Steering his cradled craft
By the self-same gales that waft
The mammoth of ocean barks.
Oh, happiest, happiest time,
So blissful, so unseeing,
Buoyant with pride of prime
And guileless joy of being;
Now mounting high with the larks,
Now dipping with merry swallows
Through eddying curves and hollows

Of a swift and blinding flight,
That turns and leads and follows
With never an end in sight—
Till warm antennæ and wing
Tire of satisfied will,
Weary of flash and fling ;
And the summit of joy and power,
The apex of the hour,
Is reached—and the wind grows chill.

Is there a prescient spark
Even in the fragrant dark
Of a butterfly's flower-full soul ?
Where cease the waves that roll
Through the psychical universe,
From the worm to the man of lore,
The lesson to rehearse
Of Death and the Nevermore,
Of Life and the Evermore ?
For now, behold, he sinks
From the high and dizzy brink
Of the heights of atmosphere,

Swaying and leaning,
With a dazed and languid fear,
Trembling, careening,
The brightness all receding,
And dimness intervening,
And a shadow over the sun—
No worth in prayer nor pleading,
But down, down, down,
Till the harmless wing is stilled
And the Law has been fulfilled.

Invocation to a Rose

What wouldest thou say to me, what wouldest thou
give,

Thou, with thy soft, vermillion, velvet grace,
Lying impassioned among cloistral leaves?
Midst their cool emerald thy veins run fire,
And seem beneath my curious regard
Slow to expand with the rich energy
Of thy desire, as if thou fain wouldest speak.

Say what thou wilt, poor dumb and longing thing,
For I would hold thee deeper in my sense—
Not less than all can satisfy a lover.

Hast thou no other ampler-furnished tongue
Than fragrant beauty, which doth speak too soft
For mortal ears? And yet thy languorous silence,
Thy patient, slow, compelling loveliness,
Hath kindled in my heart an answering flame,
And to my soul thine own almost doth speak.
I kiss thee, but thou fad'st beneath the touch,

And kisses are but mist and mockery
That cannot pierce the subtle element
That binds and yet forever separates.
So must our souls renounce this luring hope,
This bliss ethereal, thou flower of mine—
Not mine, for I but hold thee as thy cup
Holds the unquaffed dew, as trees possess
The passing rapture of a wilding bird;
Or as the old, gray, wistful mountains hold
The calm young trees, nor wholly intermingle
Until the leaves fall dying to their graves.
So might thy dust, O rose, and mine at last
Be merged in burial; yet not for that
Do I entreat thee, but to give me now—
Now while the red wine of thine ardent blood
Sends warm and living currents to the heart—
Thy message; speak, thy soul to my soul—now!

To a Harlequin Moth

Creature of jocular and vain attire,
All parti-hued and pranked of black and red—
A clownish garb that mocks my grave desire
To know whence cam'st thou to this leafy bed
Where now I find thee at the birth of day—
From what frail, wild companions hast thou
flown,

From what bright gambols art thou an estray,
By vagrant winds of morning hither blown ?

Hast thou with others of thy impish line
Passed hours of revelry around a flame,
Leaving behind, less fortunate than thine,
Their poor gay bodies in a heap of shame ?
Wert thou less light, less thoughtless than the rest,
That hast no pity for their sordid fate,
Lying at ease here on a bush's crest,
And sleeping with indifference so late ?

Or hast thou danced in some green, dark'ning glade
 Of ferns and toadstools, dampened by the night,
Where, pirouetting with a fair moth-maid,
 Clad in a glimmering veil of virgin white,
Thou hast, in all the language known to thee,
 Told her thy love and wed her in the gloom,
Nor felt that, as the night's sweet mystery
 Encompassed thee, the dawn would be her tomb ?

If this perchance be sorrow, cast aside
 The robes that mar with trumpery thy grief ;
Renounce the masquerade of thy poor pride
 And don the sombre greenery of a leaf,
Or, apter still, the hues of humble earth. . . .
 Ah, like mankind, thy fate is not thine own,
And thou must hide thy heart's sincerest worth
 Beneath a laughing eye, and mourn alone.

Yet not alone. The God that in a mood
 Of tender humor limned thy balls of black
And red, and all the gracious fancies strewed
 Upon thy gossamer wings and peaked back,

Will stoop to pity even thee, poor friend,
Who shar'st with all, from priest to harlequin,
The love that guides and guards us to the end,
Gives virtue hope, and takes despair from sin.

Love's Unrest

Thou lovest me. I am a woman, so
I love thee whom I liked before I loved ;
For love creates itself, and therefore love
Is God. . . . Come, lover mine, and sit you down ;
There at my feet I'll teach you how to love.

Take first my hand, as one who plucks a flower
To love it, not to crush it in his hold—
Alack ! think you a tender flower could bear
So fierce a pressure, stupid that you are ?
Poor flower ! See, now, thou hast a rosier hue
Given to its petals. Nay, thou shalt not have
It more. . . . Where was I ? How can I proceed
If thou hast not my hand ? There, take it then,
But yet forget not it is but a flower.

Now look at me. . . . Nay, turn thine eyes away—
I—do not like their gaze—I—I forgot
To say 'tis better thou shouldst often look
Another way, that thou may'st scan thyself
To understand if truly thou dost love !
And to this end I'll question thee. Dost think
Of me at morn and eve, and ever with
The self-same love, and love and naught but love ?

Nay, turn away thine eyes! . . . And dost thou know
That love for me will ever be as now,
When I am old and wrinkled, weak perchance ?
Say naught. If ever thou dost love no more,
My love will die as it had never been ;
For my love hangs on thine as bee on flower,
Who, when the honey-cup is void, hums off
To gather more—or die—as it may be.

• • • • • • •
Look back at me, O lover mine ! and say,
“I love thee,” o'er and o'er. My heart is full

Of saddened thoughts that I myself have wooed.
The bee not thus would turn his honeyed wine
To bitter, nor will I! I do believe
Thou truly lovest me, as—I love thee.

"Can the Emperor Forget?"

(To A. P.)

Rumble of drums in the flashing and crashing of
battle,

Rushing of horses, with foam upon nostril and
flanks;

Clashing of bayonets, striking of swords, and the
rattle

Of wrath in the standing, of death in the fast-
falling ranks.

Trample the blood in the turf till the earth is
afire,

Burning in gore; be it English or French, it is
blood.

Profligate waste of it, spendthrift contempt of it!
Dire

The flow of it, thus making crimson the Waterloo
mud.

“Death to the enemy!” Children may suffer and languish;

Wives may speak softly of one who is baring his heart.

“Death to the enemy! Forward!” No thought of the anguish

Of wounds, with the cannon-wheels pressing their red sides apart.

What of the Emperor? Austerlitz, Jena, Marengo? Can he foresee that the conquering eagle must fall,

Beating his wings on the traitor wind? Forward the men go—

“Viva Napoleon! Death to the enemy, all!”

Falling like rain come the bullets, and falling like flowers

Drop the French musketry, rising no more from the plain.

See the firm brow of Napoleon: massive it lowers.

Shout for his victory! Never, ah, never again.

Back from the mud that is crimson, and back from
the corses

That lie by the cannon with eyes that can stare
at the sun

Without shrinking. "Awake! They are leaving
you, dumb-gazing forces!"

Ay, shout in their ears, but they move not.
Their battle is done.

Done. And the Emperor? Exiled . . . Napoleon
defeated?

He who has conquered the world? Say that
rather the sun

Fell from its course and was chained by the earth.
Fate has meted

His portion. March back what is left of you,
soldiers! 'Tis done.

• • • • • • •
Far in that isle he is ceaselessly walking his prison,
As a lion his cage, who is thinking of night-dews
that wet

His mane, and the servient sun that to dry it had
risen.

Monarch then, prisoner now. Can the lion forget?

• • • • •

Hark to the guns, that are greeting with long
detonation

Him who is back from the stranger; is home
again—home!

“Vive l’Empereur!” Hush! What mean you, fool?
This coronation

Is dust crowned with dust, and the sky is the
Invalides’ dome.

“Vive l’Empereur!” Will they cease in their idiot
babble?

Never more “Vive l’Empereur!” Men, he lies
on his shield,

Broad-browed and yellow. Those hands are so
small; did they dabble

In men’s blood? And hold—did those thin lips
cry “Fire!” on the field?

Hark to the resonant guns! O remember, my
brothers,

Thundering Waterloo's cannon and bright bay-
onets!

God, how they rattled! To him they were once
as a mother's

Lullaby. "Vive l'Empereur!" Silence . . . Ah,
he forgets!

The Flying Dutchman

As gray as the booming surf,
As bleak as the ocean vast,
With the moving dead at her hornèd head
The Flying Dutchman passed.

No wake her passage made,
No sound of weal or woe;
Without a sigh, 'twixt wave and sky,
All silent did she go.

None saw the shape but one,
Who, moaning "Woe is me!"
Thus traced her course, with accents hoarse,
For the mate and men to see:

"The dry-rot stung her sides;
I saw its glitter brave,
And where she sped the air seemed dead
As in an opened grave.

"Upon her gloomy spars
St. Elmo struck his light;
The death-dew on her canvas shone,
And shed a dripping blight.

"I saw her crew bend wan
And stiffly to their task;
Each seaman's face—God give me grace!—
Went staring like a mask.

"Each seaman's bones were sharp,
And by the sea-wind jarred
His garments hung, and swayed and swung
Like loose sails on a yard.

"We're lost!" he shrieked, and fell
All stumbling to the deck.
Ere next day's sun his course had run
They were a drifting wreck.

They drifted towards the north,
They turned and drifted south;

Man after man to rave began,
Dry-tongued, with gaping mouth.

Man after man did die,
Till only one was there,
Who huddled alone like a staring crone,
With madness in his stare.

One morn there came a ship ;
He heard the sailors shout,
As merrily and cheerily
They brought the boat about.

He rose with shaking limb ;
He clasped his bony hand ;
But all his fears dissolved in tears
As they bore him to the land.

No more to sea sail I,
But pray and go to mass ;
For I am he—God lean to me !—
Who saw the Dutchman pass.

Out of the Shadow

You did not think, who blindly were forsown
In alien arms, that I might come some day
And greet you from the first dawn of my youth,
Clean and unsullied by a worldly chance.

You did not dream once in those hot, bright dreams,
When earth so madly called you from the height,
And your soul answered, stumbling down the path,
That you might wake one day, and you might
crave

Another soul as fair as once you were.

You did not think to keep yourself withdrawn
From things that soil, that one day you might
look

With equal courage into equal eyes.

You did not think of this when self besought
The gifts of selfishness, nor dared to spurn
The contumacious alms you paid your soul
To keep its silence.

Then, as morning light
Comes to a night of tempest—thus you say—
I came. My path led close beside your own ;
You stretched your arms and pled with eloquent
eyes—

I knew not then the uses of your eyes,
What they had charmed, nor how, nor when, nor
where.

To me they seemed the eyes of chivalry,
Of all that I had loved in union blent.
They drew me no less surely than your arms—
I knew not then what others these had held.
Knew ! I knew nothing ! Maiden solitude
Had never brooded deeper than had mine,
Rapt in the contemplation of a world
Serenely good. Nay, listen, I'll not weep ;
I am too sad for tears—their time is past.

Well, thus I came, unquestioning ; and thus
You loved me, as a young and saving grace
Borne far from heaven to lift your spirit up
And teach you new philosophies of life—

A pool where you might bathe and wash you white.
And I—God help me!—loved you as the rare
Bloom of my life, the ultimate good of things,
The crown of all—my husband; blushing even
To speak the name, so sacred seemed the sound
To the child-soul of the incipient woman.
Then, passing all the rest, the pride, the hope,
The exquisite trust, the simple, hidden faith
In worshipping you—ay, there I sinned indeed,
For true it is, in thinking thus of you
I thought less of my God: a costly fault,
As later I have learned in weary pain.

Then, after this fresh happiness had passed
Into a calmer joy, one day you paused
Beside me, and, with strange-accoutred words
That needed some translation to my ear,
You told me of the others you had loved—
Told me the inmost secret of your past,
Told me the ancient story of the world;
And spared me nothing, not a single lash
Of the ensorcered whip that struck me dumb.

I rose up, you remember. It was night,
And darker night within my stricken soul.
I rose and looked at you when you had done,
Nor knew the pain you smothered with your words.
(I told you I knew nothing. 'Twas in me
The ignorance of my virtue, as in you
The ignorance had been sin—I know not why.)
I looked, but could not speak. I went away
To hide myself, to hide the shame your own
Had put on me, your wife, your second self,
Your—there's the wound—your very worshipper.

From then, even as you say . . . I have been
changed ;
Yet you were brave in the confessional,
And I not brave. I dreamed alone for hours,
And moaned a thousand times you had not kept
Your heart unsullied for my special shrine ;
Shut your face out, cried often unto God
To know why you were you and I was I,
Or some such infant-prattling in His ears.
And when the strain was over, came out pale,

And trembled in your arms, and saw your eyes
Were full of tears I had not seen before,
And felt my heart slow melting against yours—
You cried out at my kisses, “they were cold.”
I pressed you closer. Was it pity or love
That surged into my soul? I do not know.
Yet all these years it has sufficed; for Love
Has infinite vistas, and through aisles of stars
Moves, humbly, towards the eternal Altar Light.
Now leave me, love; I weary, and would rest.

The Bell

He died. . . . Alas, they said, what promise died
With him—what youth, what eloquence, they
sighed—

They who had left him lonely days to live,
Withholding then what now they fain would give.

But his rich grave, that to the living seemed
So dark, had brimmed with starlight as he dreamed,
And far away a muted bell, set free,
Rang in immortal choirs his ecstasy.

To the Czar

February 4, 1905

Imperial minion, swollen with a pride
That reeks to Heaven ; not that which still may
rear
Aloft an honest brow to face the world,
But pride that builds itself on craven fear,
Gnawing thy vitals like a stinging worm,
That gropes a deadly way to death more near ;

Who art thou that hast dared to crown thyself,
Now in this day of brotherly desire,
With power of a god ? What gave thee warrant
To cast strong equal men into the mire
Beneath thy foot, or pour the deadening slime
Of tyrant power upon their sacred fire ?

By what divine decree hast thou yet spurned
The long, sad yearning question of thy race ?

Or cast thy fellows, oft more than thy peers,
Enchained in some dark, vermin-writhing place,
Where Shame sat gaunt by woman's shrinking
breasts,
Whilst thou swept on nor slacked thy wanton
pace ?

What gives thee holy right to murder hope
And water ignorance with human blood ?
Wert thou not born of woman like thy kind ?
Hast thou not eyes and limbs ? Do evil, good,
Not bind thee like the rest to like result—
Hast thou not need of water and of food ?

From what high, universe-dividing power
Draw'st thou thy wondrous, ripe brutality ?
Is it from Jesus, standing at thy gate
And murmuring, "Little children, come to me"—
While babes lie bathed in gore about thy feet,
With more than seven wounds that gape at thee ?

O horrible. . . . Thou God who seest these things,
Help us to blot such terror from the earth.

Count, in Thy memory divine, the lives
That cast into this chasm their noble worth,
And grant to Russia in her dying need
From Thine own hand a radiant new birth !

The Young Year

(To T. B. W.)

*
She comes, she sings,
She does not know the miracle she brings ;
In her wide eyes
A white and exquisite virginal surprise,
As who should say, " What gracious world is this,
Where at the sunlight's kiss
My soul has swiftly sprung from mystery and dis-
guise ? "

Upon her face
An elemental ecstasy, a grace
Of burgeoning there seems—
Something of slumbering flowers and sleepy streams
That wake and leap to love and happiness,
Nor know a future stress,
Nor the imperious woe of past and broken
dreams.

Her heart o'erflows
With joy of every blade of grass that grows;
To her unguessed
Is the long road a million springs have pressed.
For her the earth was born, and, warm and sweet,
Lies at her dancing feet—
She cannot read in wise old Nature's palimpsest.

Oh fresh, oh dear
To wistful hearts she comes with every year,
And bids them leap
With the contagious joy of hopes that keep
Alive through patient winters. Thus the soul
Of All-that-Is its goal
Will reach, spanning the unknown gulfs from sleep
to sleep.

At Parting

Alas, that thou must die,
All bountiful and blooming as thou art !
Meseems I scarce thy bonny green did spy,
Scarce caught the young blue of thy virgin sky,
When lo, thou didst depart.

The flowers have, one by one,
Laid by the garments of their antique grace.
Ere life, too briefly exquisite, was done,
Long gazed they questioning upon the sun,
And mutely in thy face.

The little runnels all
Would lure thee yet with siren roundelay :
“ Come back, and bring the shadowy trees,”
they call.
And wide-eyed fishes lurch from leaves that fall
And die upon the spray.

Gone is the priestly hum
Of insects. In dim twilight haunts unseen
They lie adoze, their chants and chorals dumb.
They wearied waiting for thou didst not come
With faith-renewing green.

And birds that used to sing
Sleep feather-muffled on a creaking bough,
Or with soft moans comb out a listless wing.
They loved thee, Summer, thou bewitching thing !
But now—ah, where art thou ?

The Two Words

I have in my heart two words that are written in
blood—

Patience, Endurance.

I see the ocean holding the thousand passions of
the waves in leash ;

I see their onslaught on the shore, their withdrawal
back to the deeps ;

I see the calmness of the stars that stare un-
swerved

Into the farthest reaches of future realms,

Filled, too, with stars that must shine and burn till
they burn out their dross,

And are but the spirits of stars that haunt the
empyrean,

That are but as the memory of wonders that have
played their part and passed away.

I see the patience of the seeds that lie waiting in
the darkness of winter,

Knowing that if they will hold their peace and rest
in the beauty of silence

They will some day come to their blossoming.

I see the endurance of the oak against the wind and
the driven rain ;

The calm of the mountains that await the will of
the Creator,

The placidity of dawn, the sun that hastens not,
Yet arises in glory when his time is come—

All this I see, and then I look into my own heart,
And see therein the pitiful clamor, the petty unrest,
The question and doubt and onrush of a hundred
fears,

And I cry out, O Patience, O Endurance,

Be not alone written on my heart,

But enter also into the chaos of my soul

And bring it peace.

The Call of the Wander-Spirit

Come out to the open, brothers,
The open plain of the sea !
Leave children and wives and mothers,
And range afar with me.

Afar where the winds are giving
Their souls to wander free,
Where life's for the lusty living—
Come, brothers, come with me.

The spray of the salted surges
Cuts sharp with tonic pain,
The spume of the billows merges
In ice, and stings again.

But down long ocean reaches
Your course will lie to the calm

And silver of tropic beaches,
The green of the fruited palm !

Thus day and night I call them,
In spring, in winter drear ;
Whatever the fates befall them
They cannot, will not hear.

They toil and bear in sadness
The ancient yoke of Need—
The guerdon of all their madness—
Nor pause, nor hope, nor heed.

They soothe a mother's sorrow,
They guard a wife's repose,
For marvelling children borrow
Its fragrance from the rose.

Content with bribe and barter,
And counterplot of care,
Half sinner and half a martyr,
They dare, and fear to dare.

Yet sometimes to my calling
They turn with wistful eyes,
And under the laughter falling
I hear their smothered sighs.

Lines to Mount Seward

Grave mountain, priest of Deity most high,
Lifting thy head alone
Up to the broad, low-bending sky,
Where bright, angelic clouds assist thy ministry—
Within thy shadowed cup
The sunshine lies, like sacramental wine
Humbly held up
To thy great God divine
In adoration. At thy feet the hills
Stand like mute acolytes
Serving with serious eyes thy mysteries ;
Whilst thou, in answer to the inward call,
Thrilled with thy noble fate,
Before the throne supreme adorest for all.

When the long hour grows late,
And sinks the sun to other realms apace,
While darkness curtains all the visible space,

Then Night upon thy altar lights her stars ;
One after one
They leap to light,
And all the censers of the night
Are swung, rhythmic and fragrant. Streams
that run,
Murmuring prayers, now toll their solemn bells,
And silence, poignant, full of awful might,
Enwraps the worshipping Night.

In this dark copse I stand,
And view with throbbing heart, and wondering,
Thy adoration—I, aloof and strange,
Thou on my God's right hand—
Gazing upon thee, pondering
This riddle of my being and of thine ;
Thou art His footstool, I His child,
Yet all serene art thou, and I
Rebellious and defiled,
Cursing the hand that made me ; then in pain,
Begging for love again,

Love from the God I cursed—whilst thou
Lookest above with peace upon thy brow.

Oh, to escape the passion of my fate,
To know no hate,
To feel no Calvary within my soul,
But to be whole,
But to be perfect as He said,
To be as thou, great Mountain, on whose head
His smile forever rests that thou art good—
He saw that thou wert good and smiled.—

Not to be I, creature of unknown tempest and
of storm,
Deaf, blind, and wild,
Conscious of all my sin,
But saved by the shattering consciousness of God,
God seated within my soul,
And waiting with eternal patience there
Till I out of my hell escape alive,
Loving and longing,
Out of the thronging
Significances of my soul—alive.

Memories

First, dear, I loved you like the dawn,
A cool new love, discreet and pale,
A love that trembled like a fawn,
Full of shy fear lest love should fail.

Then came the noon-love ; like a flower
That glows in the embracing air,
It flung its beauty to the hour,
And, passing, left a fragrance there.

And now 'tis sunset, and the mere
Is all abloom like blossoming trees . . .
And now my evening love is here,
Half sleeping with old memories.

The Poet

The poet, working at his art,
Seemed ever of a merry heart,—
“How joyous is he born!”

Gayly he wore his crown of bay:
I lifted it one summer day
And lo, a wreath of thorn.

At Devotions

I love you. . . . What I dare not speak aloud,
At midnight can I tell on lonely beads ;
“ I love you ” for the Aves and the Creeds,
With wistful eyes above the circlet bowed,—
Until is heard the early huntsman’s horn,
“ I love you, love you, love you ” till the morn.

The Rock

With swift and swelling boom,
The waves on the Rock ran high ;
And the rushing spray shot every way
Beneath the darkening sky.

The Rock rose black and stern,
With a cruel pride rose he ;
And every drop that touched his top
Ran shuddering back to the sea.

And far to the misty left,
And far to the misty right,
Each billow ran like a hunted man
With naught to stay his flight.

When there, at the distant south,
Where the sky and the water cling,

A sail unfurled at the edge of the world,
Like a gentle spirit's wing.

The night came quickly down,
The waves grew ebon black ;
There pushed a gale behind the sail,
And sped her on her track.

Swiftly the fair ship came,
A stately thing was she ;
“ Come near ! come near ! Your port is here ! ”
Muttered the Rock in the sea.

For her no warning voice,
For her no friendly bell ;
Only the fright of the desert night,
And a laugh as if from hell.

She struck on his traitor heart,
She reeled from the horrid shock ;
And down with her crew, ere half they knew,
She sank at the foot of the Rock.

And the Rock rose black and stern,
With a flaunting front rose he ;
And every drop that touched his top
Ran shuddering back to the sea.

Meeting

How often have I pictured it, dear love,
How I would hear thee, see thee, swiftly step
Within thine arms and stand there, all content
To know they were about me. . . . I would feel
The beating of thy heart, and listen half
Amazed to hear the words I know would fall
From thy dear lips. For, doubting it could be
A very truth that thou wert safe returned—
So often, God forgive me, have I known
Imagined woe—would I uplift mine eyes
To thine, and question being with the kiss
That I have kept so long for thee—so long !

But at the pressure of thy lips, distrust
Would lose itself in love's transcendent calm.
So I were lost in thee, my spirit clasped
In thine, and we alone remained of all
Creation which had faded when we met.

A Wind-Storm on the Caribbean

One day upon the white, brown-veined sand
Sped an aerial sprite. Fell news he bore.
Scarce had he passed when, lo ! upon the shore
Struck in deep menace many a steel-clad hand
Of the wave-army. Then, 'twixt sea and land
Rose the stern strife, high raging more and more,
Till all the land lay sodden, wet, and sore,
And the sea-soldiers' plumes with fury fanned.
Caught in the conflict, hissed the snaky palm ;
And far, far out among the gleaming host
Of billows rolled a ship that prayed for calm
And sunny havens. As a weeping ghost
She dripped and shivered till, like a sweet psalm,
The sea sang, and she saw the smiling coast.

The Lure

Lord of the moonlight and shade, swiftly I've come
at your calling,

Left in the roadway my pail where the milk of the
kine should be falling.

Here have I come to the sound of your voice at the
ways that are parting,

Here have I followed the track of your steps pass-
ing over my heart.

All day long they have passed while I worked at
my task in the noonlight,

Late in the afternoon sun, and now in the shadow
and moonlight ;

Hither I sped to your call though the pail in the
roadway is lying,—

Hither I came, but 'tis silence that greets me and
you are not by.

I will go back to my task, ah, lord of the moon-light and shadow,

Back to the wondering kine that wait for me there in the meadow.

I will go back—but the task will be never the same for the smarting,

Never the same for the steps that have worn the long path in my heart.

As the Woman Spoke

Musing, I loitered in a summer lane
Brimmed o'er with twilight; and my thoughts
were calm

With evening gentleness—when suddenly
A woman's form, dim-visaged, and enwrapt
With the pale gloom of hidden mystery,
Moved in my sight. Nearer she came, nor paused
Till by an ancient oak she stood so near
That I could hear the surging of her breath,
Deep-drawn and perilous as stormy seas.
Then from the farther dusk another form
Drew near, and thus, perceiving him, she spoke :

"Ah, you are here, have answered to my first
And only summons—from the grave . . . I mean
The grave of my long struggle. I have come
With prayer and fasting from the crucifix.
Our love, that faced the highway of the world,

Must pause and turn its face to Heaven. If we
Are strong, this strength must now be consecrate
Unto our rescue ere it be too late—
For other hearts would break were ours made
whole.

Hear me! for in despite of every tie
That binds me with a hundred sacred cords—
One above all most sacred of them all—
Despite the labor of a conscience taught
To scan itself with rigor merciless;
A faith that ever turned unto its Maker
As children to their mothers;—a desire
To rise above the conflict of this life
White-winged, untarnished by the human chains
That cling about our steps and test our worth,—
Despite all this, and more, the truth has con-
quered—

I love you with my heart, my mind, my soul.

"No—no—but hear me first unto the end.
Never before could I have spoken thus,
Yet has it trembled often on my lips,

So nearly uttered that my cheek has paled
With terror of it. . . . Of a stronger stuff
Are saints, beloved one. Call me not saint.
Yet, I could die now with a saintlike calm.
You do not know how all this weight of love
Has crushed me. I have longed to speak, to say
I love you—I have laughed it to the day,
Wept it alone at night, and prayed it too,
But ever pressed it back into my heart
Unuttered. Now my love is like a torrent
Long prisoned by the ice that, once released
By the warm summer air, leaps dashing past
Its utmost boundary. . . . Oh, that I could tell!
But now my woman's tongue, trained to protect
The impulsive heart, can find no equal words.
For oft have I denied you to the world,
Turned you to ridicule lest all might be
Discovered by cold eyes that would profane.
And I have talked of you—you, my sole love—
As of a stranger—turned your virtues o'er,
Defined your weaknesses in unmoved speech:
‘Yes, he is somewhat lacking in the measure—

Not quite judicious in his lighter mood,
And something flippant when he should be grave—'
While underneath the words my heart bled on.
Once . . . I grew jealous,—yes, 'twas I, your saint—
Heaven pity women who are saints!—yes, jealous,
Like any elemental savage thing ;
And hate possessed my heart that awful hour
For you, myself, the world. The very thought
Sickens me now, that love and hate could grow
So close together : but I made no sign.
Almost the solemn round of daily toil
Became a lock-step, which, with all my kind,
Confined me to convention. And my face
I wore as masqueraders wear the masks
That smile eternally, and hide their scars.
Now I have broken silence !—once again
Let me but say I love you, love you, love you—
For I am speaking only from the grave. . . .

“Nay, say not that such love must bud and flower ;
For there is love and love, and some may blossom
And some must die and never see the light.

Dear one, believe me, I have fought the fight
And conquered. Would you tempt me back to
earth—

You whom I worship as a slave her lord,
Whose pathway I would kiss because you trod it?
Alas, I am more basely cruel now
To you than to myself—I am bereft
Of reason when my love engulfs me so.

O God! how hard it is to wrench the spirit
Out of its clay. I would I might be strong
And that these eyes might lose the power to weep;
Then might I be more honestly your saint—
How blindly do you love, that call me saint!
But now, now I am strong again. Some peace
Has come to me from sources still unknown—
Ever we hope it is the pity of God:
He must be pitiful, who is all good.
Do you not think He pities us sometimes
When we, so weak, are trying to be strong?
And that He will forgive an honest love
That came too late to have His blessing here?
Ah, must He not forgive us when He sees

That we have snuffed temptation's candle out—
Out, though it leave us groping in the dark ?
Not dark, you say—and I your star, your star.
But if I am your star and I must shine,
Then you, who are my sun, go not too far
Lest my poor pale reflection fade and die.
You are my strength, as I am yours. Alone
I could not stand. And I would have our love
Be everything that's fair and true and brave ;
I would unfurl its banner, fling it wide
To the broad sky to be an oriflamme
Untouched by cowardice or any wrong,
That we may look to God for help and mercy.
For only at the crucifix I learned
What now I know—our way is by the Cross.
Let me not bear it all alone, dear love—
The burden bends me to the earth. Your soul
Must steady me and bear its share—come, come.
Our love will lighten it, and in the dark
Will be a lamp-lit shrine upon the way,
For love, if it be noble, is of Him
Who made us. . . . Look, my own, the dusk is here,

The time has come to say farewell. . . . I know
When souls survive these bodies, mine is yours,
Yours mine. And when upon that height we
meet,

Two spirits that have conquered, and can gaze
Clear-eyed into eternity, you turn
And look upon me where I stand and tremble,
Waiting your recognition, with what joy
Our souls will mingle as they were but one,
Clean, unafraid beneath the eye of God. . . .
Farewell."

With long embrace and wordless sighs
They parted, and by dim-diverging paths
Walked slow asunder, nor for one last look
Did either turn again; but all their mein
Bespoke a grave irrevocable vow.
And as they vanished, like a curtain dropped,
Folding them out as they had never been,
Fell soft the living silence of the wood.

The Canyon of the Colorado

Behold the realm where Colorado flows !
Here countless centuries have wrought their will
In forms majestic with impellent skill ;
Cathedrals reared their naves from this repose,
With pomp of giant pinnacle where glows
The sunset ; and a stream, that scarce might fill
An emperor's chalice, carved its way until
The sculptures of a million years uprose.
And from the embedded silence of this stone—
Strange hieroglyphic tomb of time's decay—
The river's voice forever stronger grown,
A sunlit spirit in its shadowing clay,
Sings to the soul that makes impatient moan,
And speeds it blithely on unto the open Day.

The Eternal Trust

There is a dream of beauty in the heart
Of every being. In serenest depths
It lies, the seedling of his spirit's flower.
Hid though it be by sin or circumstance,
By blinded error, or by conscious crime,
It still is the immortal part of each
And bides its hour to guide the onward soul.

The miner in his dimly lighted cave,
Bent like a gnome to grapple with the rocks,
Pitting his strength against earth's harshest mood,
Hears in his heart, amid the echoing blows,
The murmur of a stream where once he played.
He knows not why, but in his bosom leaps
Some sweet response. He brushes off a tear.

With hungry eyes the mother keeps her watch
Above the whimpering infant in her arms.

And oft she weeps, and oftener she prays
That God will leave this child within her care
That nothing she can give may be withheld.
And suddenly the dawn floods all the room,
And from the mother's heart pours forth a song.

Behind his grating, lost in life-in-death,
Reclines the prisoner in solitude.
Memories are his that mingle with man's blood.
Upon his brow spring sudden drops of sweat,
And his weak frame an anguished shudder spurns.
But hark—a breeze sings through the grate, God's
breeze.
A mother loved him, God too—and he sleeps.

The youth toils up the mountain-side, and height
Rises on height above his eager gaze.
Undaunted still, though tears or laughter come,
He offers all his life for the Beyond ;
And when through gaps of greenery he sees
The prospect open, city, plain and sea,
His pulses bound, he presses gayly on.

O dream of beauty, truth, eternal trust,
Guide of our tired feet and restless hearts !
Without thy lovely aid what barren days
Would be our lot—but thou, with God's own voice,
Showest the way to great alike and small,
The way that leads through brave or humble paths
To the long goal where all at last shall meet.

Mirage

I have dreamed a golden dream—
A fancy of you and me
In a little slumbrous village,
Somewhere in Arcady ;
You with a book of verse
Reading, and thinking, to me ;
I as bland as a slave,
Locked in a vagrant mood
Of wondering this and that
Of the things you understood—
You only understood
Of all the souls that be
In or out of the village
In dreamy Arcady.

A Cynic to Phœbe

And has he falsely done,
Poor Phœbe—looked upon
Thy pretty bloom and said 'twas good,
And kissed thee at the door—
And never kissed thee more ?
'Tis hardly to be understood.

Yet art thou not the first
For whom the bubble burst !
Look back along the dreaming years
And see them, women, men,
Who ask for faith again,
With melancholy sighs and tears.

Nay, child, mope not alone,
But pity and condone ;
All is not lost, though hope doth fret.

Come, smile and dance and sing ;
Life is a puzzling thing
That we must live through—and forget.

A Vision of Flora

(In imitation of Spenser.)

Betwixt long fields of roses Flora came,
Clad nymphlike in a veil of gossamer,
Whose airy softness wrapped her like a flame
That in a summer zephyr is astir ;
This way and that it blew, and lent to her
The fairy outlines of a fringed flower :
But fairer than a flower the graces were
That gave this queen of summer her rare power
To summon blossoms sweet for every roseate hour.

Around her beauteous head flew humblebees
To taste the honey of her smiling lips,
From which most wondrous nectar at their ease
They do distil, all others to eclipse ;
And when in each young flower the insect dips
His wandering cup, in rose or columbine,
Some tiny drop of this rare dew he slips

Within the nectary, that so divine
The brew may be enriched like rare and goodly wine.

As Flora passed, the roses leaned to kiss
Her velvet bosom and her dulcet eyes ;
And as they stooped, the steep incline of this
Soft motion poured the dew-drops, shower-wise,
From their damp petals, which, in linked guise
Of pearly necklaces, with magic sheen
Garlanded Flora's form : as maiden vies
With maiden so to deck their lady queen
That hers may be the loveliest image ever seen.

A shadow fell athwart the enchanting scene :
It was a cloud of butterflies that hid
The golden sun a moment from the een ;
So many-colored they, no mortal did
Ever behold such various hues amid
The flowery realm. Near and more near they flew,
And reaching earth alighted, as she bid.
Upon their balmy wings herself she threw,
And swift ascending slowly melted from the view.

The Murder

He did to me a bitter wrong
And I, outmatching fate,
Had waited patiently and long
To give him hate for hate.

But though I cursed his loathèd breath,
There was no murder-stain,
For even as I willed his death
He walked the marts of gain.

Yet from that day my wrists are bound
With dark and shadowy gyves ;
My step that seems to spurn the ground
In vain for freedom strives.

And I, whom proud men cringe before,
Or pledge with flattering bowl,
Wait crouching, trembling, ragged, sore,
The verdict of my soul.

Starward

As a young eagle from the warm nest freed
Sweeps with ecstatic wings to peaks afar,
Eternal faith shakes off the clasp of creed,
And travels, outward bound, from star to star.

The Full Hour

When a woman is but a thing
For a man to fondle and pet,
Let her dance and sing—
Her hour is not yet.

When a man is but a staff
For a woman to cling to, dumb,
Let him strut and laugh—
His hour is not come.

The King

Suggested by Gérôme's picture, "Thirst"

Stretches of sand whereon no thing of life
Is visible. The sky a copper plane
Hung like a cymbal poised before the strife
Of clashing. Lying, seething, grain on grain,
The sand stares up, the vacant sky stares down,—
As on two idiots, one by the other seen,
Grows no expression, neither smile nor frown,—
And heated, filmy mists are spun between.
Across this horrid space a lion's tread
Is traceable. None save a king dare track
This barren waste. Kingly he reared his head,
And his proud step pressed firm upon the rack
Of blistering sand. . . . But in an oasis
How low he bent a water-drop to kiss!

The Measure

The measure of a poet's art
Lies not within the volume bound,
But in the caverns of his heart,
The buried tears in wells profound.

Monody

Love, I have heard upon a tropic sea
The threatening thunders of the hurricane,
Have listened to the milder minstrelsy
Of northern breezes in a primrose lane ;
Have heard the roar of cataracts that start
The echoing depths—and all but seemed the same
Soft monotone, as if within my heart
Some sweet-souled bell tolled evermore your
name.

Redivivus

(To G. I. S.)

Lift me, O stars, far up into the heights,
That I may breathe with thee immortal air ;
Burn from the soul's poor record days and nights
Of listless work, and fretful dreams of care,
And shine into my spirit's cool, sheer deeps
Wherein thy own ethereal essence sleeps.

Sleeps as the sap within the oaken boll,
That, waking on the winter's dull decline,
Yearns springward,—so if thou but call my soul
Its latent fire will leap to merge with thine,
And rediscover in the piercing flame
What heaven hath wrought, and earth hath put to
shame.

Song of the Paving-Stones

We are the paving-stones ;
Over our ancient bones
 The restless people pass,—
Over our patient bones
 As breezes over the grass.

Endlessly to and fro,
 Man and woman and beast,
Hither and thither they go,
 Beating to west and east,
Beating to east and west,
 Like ships on the ocean's breast.

Some of them laugh in glee,
 Some of them weep in woe ;
Over our rattling bones,
 On, with their moans and groans,
On, with their laughter free,
 Over and over they go.

Brides all smiling and fair
Pass in their bridal white ;
Babes that wonder and stare,
Men that have died that night.
Lovers whose hope is bright,
Lovers who know despair.

Men of a thousand fates,
Women of countless aim,
Each with his loves and hates,
Famed, or without a name ;
Some that luxury know,
Some that hunger for bread,
Over and over they go,
Living and dying and dead,—
Over our ancient bones,
Bones of the paving-stones,
As breezes over the grass
The folk of the city pass.

To Mark Twain

(On his Seventieth Birthday)

Mirth is forever young, and laughter leap
From the fair lips of gods immortal, too ;
And tenderness and truth know naught of age.
Nor can the soul's capacity for rage
At dark injustice ever know decay :—
You, of these deathless qualities compact,
Must needs escape the fate dull mortals reap,—
Life proves her fairest promises in you,
In every written word and fearless act
Sees her high dreams of chivalry come true.

How shine at times the brows of honest men !—
Rare as the stars upon a clouded night,
That gleam with richer lustre in despite
Of darkness all around them, and again
Inspire our hope and shame away our pain—
So do you shine and cheer us on, Mark Twain !

How we have laughed with you ! How you have
laughed

With us—and sometimes we have wept together,
For there is every kind of storm to weather
In Life's long voyage, every kind of craft
To sail in, and each sailor can but do
The best that in him lies : so, if he drown,
We still can say, Well, there a Man went down.
And what we like is this, Mark Twain, in you,
That you were ever cheerful at the wheel
Whether in rain or sun, and no man knew
From what you wrought, what sorrow you might feel.

And now, as on your head these seventy years
Have whitened, and you wear the varied crown
Of Life, full-gemmed with laughter and with tears,
We greet you and we bless you. May no frown
Of churlish fate have power to haul down
The standard you have flung upon the air
Of our America, and may it there,
The symbol of a manhood fearless, free,
Forever float for all the world to see !

Elyria

Within the garden where the roses bloomed
To countless glories, and the fountain sprang
With outer music and interior grief
Pursuing the far sky, Elyria waited,
Watching the slow unfolding of a bud.

It was her passion thus to tend the flowers,
To say they were the children of her heart,
Her lover, husband—all that other women
Counted most dear of their true happiness.

For other women laughed that she could hold
A red rose to her heart and fondle it,
Call it soft names of womanly caress
And look up smiling from the cold delight—
For cold they deemed it, and unnatural
That ever maid could thus forego her fate
To love a man, and keep his house for him,
And bear him children, comfort him in woe—
The wholesome fate all women should desire—

To waste on silly flowers her coquetry.
This might have spurred the ardor of a man
To build a house and set Elyria there,
The mistress of his courage and his love.
“What recks,” they cried, “the riches of her hair,
Or her full bosom or her sea-blue eyes ?
Do flowers have need of beauty in their keeper ?
Grow they the faster if a slender hand
Sifts daintily the earth about their feet ?
Are roses redder for her roseate cheek ?
Or mignonette more fragrant for her breath ?
There is no patience for a maid like this !”

Elyria heard their murmurs in the lane,
And smiled all silently and kissed a rose,
With honey phrases musically soft.
“For thou,” she said, “art all perfection, love :
I look at thee and both my eyes are filled
With color. And thy fragrance holds no sting.
At night I leave thee, and when dawn is come,
With cool earth-odors and the sense of dew,
I fly to see what night hath wrought with thee,—

Lo, thou art still more exquisite ; repose
Hath ripened thee to thy consummate grace.
So all thy life I know thou hast fulfilled
The law ; and when thou diest, my poor rose,
There is no sorrow in my heart, but joy
That thou hast been all true to thine estate.”
Then turned she to the fountain brim and sighed,
And all the garden glowed into its prime.

But down the plumy path, with mincing step
And tapping cane and flowing silken skirt,
Elyria’s grandam came remonstrant there.
“ How now, Elyria ! Time is waxing old.
The sun is not so warm, nor moon so bright,
As this time even a year agone ; and you,
Think you to hold forever to your youth,
Keep bright your eyes, unwrinkled your smooth
cheek,
Upright your form, nor bend as I do now ?
For once I was like you — nay look not doubt-
ful—
Ask any man these many miles around

Who knew me then"—the old dame cackling
laughed—

"And if I danced not faster than the rest,
And met the dawn with fresher eyes than they!
Ay, ask them if my eyes were not as bright,
My teeth as white and milky as your own.
And see me now—so age will come to you."

Then said Elyria : "Age, if it be thus,
With eyes and spirit like to yours, can have
No terror, grandam, for your poor Elyria.
What is my fault : what is it you would have?"

"What would I have?" the grandam cried, unmoved
By the soft phrasing. "Ah, what would I have?
What I a hundred times have now commanded :
Marry. Your mother left your fate to me.
And must I, too, depart and leave you lone,
Wedded to roses and to marigolds?
For, 'truth, ambition seems to stay you here.
Have you no tender instinct of a maid
Who longs for love, for home, for children? Speak."

Elyria's eyes were hid within her hand,
And there was silence, save for singing bees
That wooed the favor of the mignonette,
Or fell, half-slumbering, from a rose's arms,
And for the amorous murmur of the fountain,
And in the trees the long sighs of the wind.
Elyria heard them as a prisoner taken
From out his home hears its recendent sounds.
Then from her face the cool white fingers fell,
And on the grass she sank with drooping head,
And spoke, and all her tones were thrilling
sweet.

"Dear mother, for to me you are the same
Since mine was taken from me, do with me
Whate'er you will, but spare me talk of mar-
riage.

For one I love there is, and true to him
I live and I shall die." Agape then stood
The dame to hear what she had never heard
From this strange daughter of their gentle house,
As looking up to her with piteous eyes
Elyria spoke :

“ I am as other maids,
Yet not the same, for I have been a wife
In the full heavenly rapture of a dream.
’Twas thus : I lay asleep, and ere the dawn
Came one of those clear dreams, so like to
life
The dreamer knows not when he wakes which be
Life or his dream,—and in it I beheld
A man whose soul so answered to my own
We seemed one soul, yet each replied to each
As we indeed were two. The mystery seemed
No mystery, but the perfect blossoming
Of all my being, as the roses bloom.
How long it was I have no means to tell,
But in the instant passing of that dream
I lived the whole span of a woman’s life,
All its hid ecstasy and uttered joy ;
And it was like the lives of other women
Save in one thing—oh, wonderful it was—
That I was happy even as flowers are.
No pang of grief had pierced me—no con-
cealed

And so more bitter sorrow gnawed at me ;
I knew no disappointment, nor a cloud
Of doubt—knew no loved child's ingratitude,
No mortal pains, no disillusionment
Of him I loved—in short, no single trace
Of woman's human anguish did I know,
But in one long ethereal happiness
Knowing supreme fulfilment of my hope,
I lived my lifetime out. Then I awoke,
And looked in wonder at my quiet room,
The sky without ; heard, mystified, the birds
That made familiar music ; thought of you
In sudden wonderment that you desired
I soon should marry—I who had a mate
Surpassing all the wishes of my heart.
Then I arose, and to my garden came,
And stood there marvelling, as I were lost
In a ghost-haunted world ; and as I reached
Blindly for staff or shelter, plucked a rose
And heard the message its perfection brought. . . .
For who that knew the beauty of a flower
Could worship in its stead the leaves of grass ?”

She looked with eyes of one who sees a vision,
While all the passion of her spirit burned
In one still gaze concentrated. 'Twas as she
Had long forgot the aged listener
Glancing askance at her as one in fear.—
“ So do I wait the coming of that One
Though we but meet in far, eternal time.”
Then as she silent fell the grandam fled
Tapping along the path, with head that wagged
In wordless terror of a thing unknown.
While musing patiently among the flowers,
Elyria slow returned unto her dream.

The Road of Love

Yes, I have loved you long and loved you well,—
Yet there are deeps untouched and heavens sealed;
More yet lies hidden than has been revealed,
And there are songs to sing, and tales to tell.

Love's incompleteness is its richest foil,
Love's imperfection its most perfect trait.
'Tis easy running to the bounds of hate,
But love's road is the long, long road of toil.

At Bethlehem Centre

Among the dales of Bethlehem—

Not that blest village of the past—
A nearer hamlet, nestling low
Between the hills and Hudson's flow,
Secure from winter's sterner blast,—

Like to a haven, where the ships

Find home and rest from stormy seas,
Sweet Bethlehem lies among her dales,
Her wooded hills and meadowed vales,
In honest toil and virtuous ease.

Her sons and daughters read the sky

As scholars in a musty tome ;
The summer breeze and wintry wind,
The flowers they sow, the grain they bind,
Are but the epic of their home.

Around them lie the fatted fields,
Where every fruit is theirs to reap,
Where milky kine tenfold give back
The thrifty care their stalls ne'er lack ;
Where soil is kind and furrows deep.

'Tis there proud nature smiles with joy
To find her bounties nobly earned,—
And there the housewife, nature's child,
Rests from her toil at evening mild,
The white loaf baked, the butter churned.

O Bethlehem, kind Bethlehem !
A wanderer from the world of dole
Once breathed thy clover-scented air,
Drew nearer to the Father there,
And felt thy peace revive his soul.

The Soldier and the Man

(Moscow)

With lip firm pressed, and stern eye set
On the line where the sky and the ice-field met,
The Emperor sat in his iron car
And rode away from the seat of war.

Forward!

And grim was his brow and white his cheek,
And few were the words he made to speak.

To right, to left, to the front, to the rear
His infantry lay, the dead, the dear ;
And there were his cavalry's frozen eyes
Upturned to him in their agonies.

Forward!

And over their bodies the black wheels ground,
With never a shudder from him at the sound.

But oh ! the cry of the wife and child
For the soldier dead on the Russian wild.

Thought he of this as he thought of the day
When they cried : "Vive Napoleon!" marching
away ?

Forward !

Thought he of this as row upon row
Of dead were spread on the Russian snow ?

With head bent low on his weary breast,
He rolled in his car to the sunny west,
With ever the thought of the loss at his back ;
And he cried to his men like a man on the rack,

" Forward !

And leave to the devil this rotting horde ;
Thousands they be, nor could lift one sword!"

To the Men of Congress

(On the occasion of delay in debate during labor troubles)

Men of brain, who in debate
Mould a mighty Nation's fate,
Do ye know how grave the duty God upon your
lives has laid ?

Do ye hear His warnings roll
In the silence of your soul,—
In the grandeur of that silence are ye listening,
afraid ?

Hear ye not the appealing cry
Of your brothers marching by
With the rusting axe and hammer, seeking labor
for the day ?

Do ye hear them when the night
Hides their grime and pain from sight,—
Do ye hear the stumbling tongues of their children,
as they pray ?

Do ye hearken their distress ?
With a man's unselfishness
Are ye chivalrous to care for the weaker in the
fight ?
Do ye use your forceful hand,
Ye protectors of your land,
For the helpless and the stranger in their struggle
for the right ?

Waste ye not the fleeting day
In a wordy, deedless fray ;
Bend your strength to help the man who is fainting
to the sod !
What's your pride to children's fears,
To a father's shamefaced tears ?
Boast your souls so loudly in you that they dim
the voice of God ?

Up ! ye men upon whose powers
Rests a nation such as ours,—
In whose honor trusts a country that has crowned
you with that trust !

Leave your pandering to pride,
Turn your party whims aside,
Rise and meet the Hour that calls you ere your
names be tramped in dust !

A Thought

Love jubilant is the triumph of the law,
That ever towards the truth may climb ;
But love denied is soulless as a straw ;
It has small reason, less of rhyme,
And makes men old, ay, old before their time.

Life

I am o'er-weary picturing the strife;
This is a solemn fate—to ride to death
Lashed through the hurrying fatal lists of life,
Strengthless to cease, begging for one short
breath,
Yet spurned for answer by a Power that thrusts
Its spurs into the soul. Upon the brow
Stand beads of blood; the very javelin rusts
From tears; the drooping form can scarce but
bow
To earth. "One moment, Power, one resting space,
Have mercy!" "On, on, on!" the stern reply.
I urge, "I once have triumphed, is not grace
For victory?" "Have on! Thy grace am I!"
"Is there no pause, no rest, however brief?"
"On to the fight! Thy death is thy relief!"

Immortalis

Fair Poetry, thou rare and shining child
Of immortality, and in thy turn
Mother of those immortals who still burn
The torch-lit fires of Beauty undefiled,—

Turn thy impassioned loveliness away,
Lest it be blighted by the ignorant scorn
Of commerce and her creatures, that unborn
And brooding poet-hearts they may not slay !

Fly to unriven solitudes, where God
May nurture thee in triumph as of old,
When o'er the world his flaming thunders rolled,
And Moses drank the waters of the rod.

Venture not forth from thy divine retreat,
Nor bare thy beauteous head to clownish mock,
Till there is hewn through occidental rock
Some worthy pathway for thy gentle feet.

Yet sometime, from thy far, miraculous hill
Where childlike Truth unchidèd yet may dwell,
Send to the little band that loves thee well
Some clarion word that may inspire it still !

The Flight

What time proud Dian swift pursued the chase
In broad Athenian groves, through shade and light,
Her eager limb and arch, desirant face
Outshone the beauty of each huntress bright
Who followed where she led. A weary space
She bade them linger by a whisp'ring stream
That sighed to lave them in its languid flight,
And wooed till all consented. Like a dream
Of Eden swept the zephyr o'er the brow
As swayed each maid in the embracing tide
Of limpid clarity, so fair a rill
Did Dian choose. But hark! a crackling bough,
And from the wood a mortal stranger hied . . .
A flash of glistening thighs: all fled—all still!

This Love

This love, love, love,—
Joy hath no other thing,
All else it hath a hollow ring ;
Riches breeding envy, hate ;
Honor coming oft too late ;
Something lacked in every art ;
Learning making dry the heart ;—
But love, the rarest of them all,
For which the heart doth hope and call,
That warms the cheek with cheerful red,
That fills with fairer thought the head,
And gives a new and nobler birth
To all the common things of earth ;—

This love, love, love—
Joy hath no other thing ;
All else it hath a hollow ring !

Real Lives

When men, and women too, have lived real lives,
Not been mere puppets in a puppet show ;
When they have watched the infant spears of grass
Grow stout and strong and fill their purposes ;
And seen the ant with all her countless store
Of wisdom build her cities, granaries,
Fight her good fights, and lead her kidnapped
slaves
Not to base uses, as great men have done,
But to a useful freedom under law ;—
Have counted all the flowers that feed the bees,
And searched the hollows for the ripened nuts ;
And praised the pink marshmallows for their grace
To give such delicate beauty to a swamp ;
When they have listened to mysterious woods,
Heard the woodpecker tapping, rat, tat, tat,
And seen a rustling flurry among the leaves
Where some shy creature flies into its home ;

And felt the very silence of the place
Beat in the heart as if they pulsed together ;
When they have passed long hours upon a stream,
And seen quaint ripples made by staring fish ;
Have drifted down to shadows, where the trees
Kiss the dim water in all gentleness,
While through the air the pollen of the sun
Has sifted, bit by bit, till every breeze
Is saturated with the golden warmth ;
Till sleep that's a communicant of heaven,
So pure, so bright, so holy calm it is,
Steals the poor senses—when those women and men
Have not been puppets, but have known these
things,
Then can you talk with them of what God is
Without a conscious blush, as children do
When they boast bravely of their mother's love.

Song

Within a valley fair,
Light footsteps come and go,
And warm upon the southern air,
The rarest roses blow.

More lovely are the flowers
Than any under the sky,
And there the swiftly passing hours
Make music as they fly.

Over their mountain-bed
The streams of the north wind flow,
And cold and white as the silent dead
Lies the eternal snow.

And there no voice is heard,
No foot at morn or night,
Nor e'en the wings of a wandering bird
Dare scale that solemn height.

Yet, as long as shines a star
Upon this world below,
May Love be not as the roses are,
But as the eternal snow.

On the Reading of Shakespeare

(To H. P. G.)

He that has conned Will Shakespeare well has read
Our human history ; for who but he
Has read so much that has so well been said ?
And did he read it understandingly,
So much the greater must his own soul be,
Wrought in the very mould of Shakespeare's own,
Though like to his as to a rock a stone,
Or a shell's murmur to the chorussing sea.
Still in that distant likeness can he dwell
In worlds enchanted, where Philosophy
And Love seek quaint disguises, and the bell
Of mocking Folly tinkles merrily,
And all is well because, through that strange land,
He walks with Shakespeare, slow, but hand in hand.

A Heady Maid

I

Do men wive hypocrites from very choice
Or very blindness? He who would a mate
To cling about his flattered neck, and voice
In purring tones her sweet, obedient fate
(Though all the while she works her will, withal),
Can none of me, who hate such warm deceit!
I'll say plain "Yea" and "Nay"; if th' occasion
call,
A round, firm "Nay," with tone in no wise sweet,
But savored rather bitter if there fell
Necessity! My Grandame says should he
Speak out his "Yea," as round and firm as well,
What would the outcome be? 'Twould plainly be
(Poor dame! she's worn with marriage many a
day),
That I would hate him till his yea grew nay.

A Heady Maid in Love

II

Did I say hypocrites? I meant it not.
How were a maid a hypocrite who's led
By love to use mild patience in the stead
Of disputatious word, and anger hot?
Besides, it were not womanly; 'twould mar
The grace of dignity, a woman's crown.
'Tis but a child who needs must scream and
frown
For what he cannot grasp. . . . Sweet Grandame, far,
Behind lies all that thoughtless time of mine,
And everything is altered, I of all
Most changed. The earth has taught some alien
lore
That gives the sun and moon a wondrous shine;
And something lost is held in gain's sweet thrall:
Though one I know, myself I know no more.

The Derelict

(To E. S. A., Jr.)

A derelict am I,
A child of mournful fate—
No home but the sea and sky,
No captain and no mate.
My steersman is the wind,
And never a crew I see,
They wrecked me here at the cold New Year,
And straight abandoned me.

I've sailed a many a mile,
And curious sights I've seen.
I've rocked where the tropics smile,
And far to the North I've been,
Where icebergs threatened me
With a cell in a frozen grave.
But here and there some unseen care
Contrives my hulk to save.

I've passed in the long Gulf Stream
A thousand ships or more.

I've seen the Lookout dream
Of his wife and babes ashore.

I've floated by his prow,
All menacing of death,
So near, so near, that I could hear
The indraw of his breath.

I flee in the desert night,
Before the storm alone,
For peace and the morning light
My tortured timbers groan.
No crime is on my soul,
Yet, with a thousand jaws
To harry me, the pitiless sea
It gnaws, and gnaws, and gnaws.

William Tecumseh Sherman

Soldier and friend he was, and which in him
Stood nearer to perfection know we not ;
To be as both beloved was his lot.
For he was strong and resolute and grim
In time of war, and firm as an oaken limb
In whose long strength the years do seem for-
got,—
Whose surface, only, bears the weather-blot,
Whose light of life Time falters to bedim.
And as its shade impartial, so was he
Unto his friend—the poor man or the king ;
For where his trust lay, there his mien was free.
His soul was honor's own ; nor anything—
Nor gold nor power—turned his path aside.
All this he lived, and more, all this he died.

To Keats

Stretch me, dear Keats, thine absent spirit hand ;
For I do love thee when I sometime read
Thy pensive lines, and in whatever land
Thou art, would wish thee back my steps to
lead—
But that thy melancholy must return
With thy return to earth, and in thy breast
Must rise again the anguish and the pain
That sped thy pen ;—for all the old unrest
That once within thy tender heart did burn,
Would, with this life, come back to thee again.

Where wanderest thou ? Upon what green hill-side ?
What look thine eyes upon ? What fills thy soul
With the full joy that here thou wast denied—
So high was heaped thy flowing cup with dole ?

Is all made clear that once was dark as death :
 Night so dissolved in day's eternity,
That haply thou forget'st the spirit's rack
 Here on the narrow earth, where every breath
Strives to be freer ? Yet, howe'er it be,
 Too well I love thee, Keats, to wish thee back.

On Looking into a Crookes' Spinthariscope

Silent, in darkness wrapt, I waited there
With patience till my eyes could pierce the gloom
To this new vision,—then into the tube,
Thrilled and expectant, stared with beating heart—
Saw Nature naked, atomic, swift at work,
With fiery sparks fluorescent on her path.
I gazed and gazed, nor could my hunger fill,
Nor soothe my heart, nor speak my newborn thought,
But in my soul one spoke for me, and said :
“ Thus may’st thou look on marvels more than
these,
On ultimate secrets of all mystery,
If thou but quell thy spirit into peace
Here in earth’s darkness, till thine eyes achieve
The final power, and thou may’st lift them up
Slowly, with throbbing heart, to the face of God.”

In the Winter Night

The night is cold, the winter blast
Is beating at the cabin door,
But all within is warm and fast—
Then let the wind his anger roar.
The fire is singing round the log,
The board is spread with mug and loaf,
Now merrily the night may jog
Though winter's here, the surly oaf.

The snow in columns whirls away
Like ghostly dervishes that dance ;
Upon the pane their shadows play ;
The fire assaults them with its lance,
Its flaming sword that guards the home,
Good angel of the altar-place,—
God pity all the souls who roam
Far from the comfort of its face.

Hark! . . . 'tis the homeless at the door.
In! In! And drink to better days!
Out to the storm you go no more—
The night with snow is all a haze.
Draw chair and table near the fire,
Forget the wind that howls above,
And while the flames go leaping higher,
We'll pledge, "To home and brother-love."

A Child

(To K. A.)

I think, to make such color-drenched orbs,
Two violets came, and modestly did pray
To be thine eyes. The violet, they say,
Is a most gentle flower, that long absorbs
From sun, from dew, from zephyrs at their play,
Some rare, ethereal essence from the day.

Then warm upon thy cheeks two roses blushed :
Of all the roses they, indeed, most fair,
With wondrous tints of nature's choicest care ;
And from their hearts the deep reflection flushed
Thy curving lips. Above, within thy hair,
The sunbeams gathered, sworn to linger there.

And for thy voice a pleasant mountain-rill
Lent its brave music. For thy brow meseems
A poet, newly wakened from his dreams,

Inscribed: Truth lives, and none its soul may kill.
And bright as earth's innumerable streams
Forever on that ardent brow it gleams!

But ah, dear child, 'tis nothing to be wise
On old, worn theses, often conned at ease,
Of love that fills and beauty that may please :
But whence the soul that in thy beauty lies ?
So questions still the mind ; so still it sees
Ever that mystery of mysteries.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

“Good Doctor Holmes is dead.”
Thus all the people said.
I in my heart alone,
Smiled at the white gravestone,
Smiled at the thing they said.

Dead! That believing heart?
Dead! That beloved art?
Open the near-by book,
Into its pages look:
Of him 'tis the greater part.

There we may hear him speak
In every hour and week,
See him in yonder page
Bright in the future age:
Waiting for all who seek.

Gone that attuning mirth ?
Gone that enriching worth ?
Nay : to such souls is given
That though they bloom in heaven,
Ne'er can they fade from earth.

Nature

In her eyrie sate she dreaming,
Where the sunlight, dappled, gleaming,
 Dyed the spicèd autumn soil
With such noble hues as Titian
Chose and mingled, or magician
 Raffaello, young in toil,
Subtly wrought into the vein
Of his canvas, stain on stain.

Lone she sate and mutely pondered,—
O'er her lucent forehead wandered
 Many a dark and curling tress ;
In her eyes of depths unmeasured
Thoughts, through countless eons treasured,
 Spoke with Orphic loveliness,
Eloquent of moon and sun,
And the course the seasons run.

At her feet the sumptuous valleys
Wound like bloom-encrusted alleys
In the garden of a king ;
And beside them sleeping mountains
Waked, to listen to their fountains
Tuning dripping harps to sing
Through the night, to fill the deep
Silences of birds asleep.

But afar through smoky spaces
Lightning left its fiery traces,
And the thunders groaned aloud ;
Farther ! and the land was riven
By an earthquake—men were driven
Homeless in a burning cloud ;
Night was there and black dismay
As they shrieked and fled away.

Saw she, heard she, the sphinx-hearted ?—
Greatest of the seers departed
Of that soul could but surmise.

Deeper than the gulfs of ocean,
Wider than the ether's motion,
Shone the mystery of her eyes.
None within her soul could see
Save unanswering Deity.

Recompense

"Poor old Andrew, toiling long
Into night with thread and thong,
Out-of-doors the owlet calling,
On your head the firelight falling,
Tap, tap, tap, with weazened smile,
On your aproned lap the while,—
Life for you is sad and stern.
Must you always midnight turn
Into noon, that you may make
Flour enough your bread to bake?
Do your laughter, sleep, and tears,
Justify the toilsome years?"
Slowly then he raised his eyes,
Looked at me in mild surprise,
"Nay," and shook his withered head,
"You forget my dreams," he said.

Man and Woman

If man but held the key
Of woman's heart, if she
Could unlock his, 'twould be
End of love's history.

So, 'tis a wise decree
That man and woman be,
As are the land and sea,
A mutual mystery.

The Dream-Child

My little dream-child called to me
Upon a midnight, cold and stark.
“Sweet mother, take me in,” sighed she,
“For I am weary of the dark.
My little soul has missed the way
Out in the wide and wandering air—
Oh, take me to your arms, I pray,
That I may find a shelter there.”

My heart leaped up to hear the sound.
“My tender dream-child, can it be
Only the dusk that folds you round,
Folds you and holds you thus from me ?
Then come ! the way is broad and fair
Unto my heart, my own, my own !”
But waking came . . . and only air
Swept past into the far unknown.

William McKinley

(September, 1901)

Kingdoms, the pride of dust, to dust return,
As History's dying hand lets fall the scroll,
But flaming through eternal paths will burn
The Godward fire of an heroic soul.

The Wayfarer

Love that weary grows upon the way,
Sighing as he goes in disarray,
Need but find a rose—lo ! he is gay.
Small and tender things dispel the mist
That his drooping wing has sadly kist,
Make him king of kings—the optimist.

O wonder of the little vales
Where streams go singing lightsomely.
And wonder of the star that pales
Before the moon's fulgurancy !
Were I the star and thou the moon,
Thou couldst not rise too soon—too soon.

The magic of the swooning star,
And of the silver-cadenced stream,

Are marvels that enchanting are
To soothe the soul within its dream.
But ah, how trivial are they
When Love comes laughing down the way !

In the Sweat-Shop

He works as wolves eat, ravenous for time,
Each move a mouthful of the niggard bread
That will not feed as many as they said
Who lured him from his harsher native clime.
Gladly he came, for Freedom called to him
Like a war clarion, and his hope leapt high
As on the glory of the Western sky
Rose Liberty above the ocean's rim.

But see—that half-fed arm that moves so fast,
Self-lashed to speed above the harsh machine,—
Is that of flesh and blood, or only seen
In charnel places where we stand aghast ?
And look—what hollows darken his gaunt cheek !
This, Freedom ? Why, his slavery cries aloud,
And Freedom's flag to him is but a shroud
Dared he give challenges to fate, and speak !

Let us be true, my people, if we can,
Nor turn away to shudder and depart
And give proud millions to the ends of Art
Or Learning, ere we learn the Rights of man.
For we, the people, makers of the laws,
In whose free hands God left the ancient trust—
On our good purpose gathers selfish dust,
And we forget this man-wreck and its cause.

O my fair Country ! wash away the stain,
Strike from your noble records this base blot !
You showed this man the way, forbade him not
To follow it, and counted him your gain.
But when your spacious arms were spread apart
And he had entered, knowing hope at last,
Like that grim iron virgin of the past
You clasped, and drove a dagger to his heart.

Inscription for a Modest Gift

'Tis not the worth that makes the gift,
To that is Friendship ever blind :—
She leans the curtain to uplift
To smile at Love who peeps behind.

The Immortal

Brook and wind, though they flow
A thousand years,
Age can they never know,
Nor age's fears,
Never be known of woe,
Nor sighs, nor tears.

Love, if it live at all,
Is young as they,
Young as the brooks that brawl
The livelong day,
Young as the winds that call
The blooms of May.

Out of the gloom Love beams
Forever young,

Bright with delights and dreams
Like jewels strung ;
Lyrical-lipped with themes
Still to be sung.

Despair

I and the night are one, and darkness breathes
Through all my being, for the dew like tears
Lies heavy on my bosom, and winds that rave
Seem my dim thought's new-made articulate self.
And under all a polyphony strange
Of murmurous rhythms in the choral night
Hums, like the fancy of a restless brain.
All these, the mysteries of incarnate gloom,
Enshroud me in a pall,—and merge my spirit
Into the night, into its woe, its rage,
Its impotent sobbing, its imagined fears,
And above all its far-alluring promise,—
For through my soul, like lances of keen hope,
I feel the importunate pricking of the stars.

Song in the Afternoon

That youth of thine,
Dear love, I do remember,
Though thy blue eyes no longer shine
With June's delight, and pale December
Hath heaped her snows upon thee :
But still thou dost remember
The gentleness that won me.

Thou art the same
As when I first beheld thee,
For youth, forsooth, is but a name,
And all the graces that impelled thee
Have so exalted duty,
That youth hath ne'er excelled thee
In perfectness of beauty.

The City at Night

Night has a thousand mysteries, not least
This of a mighty City as it lies
With thought self-centred, introspective eyes
That view its own mirage of work or feast,
Its pain and crime, its love and hope and truth,
Its holy joy and its unhappy ruth.

It sees no outer beauty of the night,
No royal stars that tread a stately dance,
No glory of the heavens spread about.
Turned ever inward is the city's sight,
Like men tense-spoken at a game of chance,
Unconscious of eternity without.

Man's Power

Ay, true, he lives in strong estate.

For him the waves submit to bear
His freighted vessels here and there,
Or turn the wheels that make him great.

To him old Earth hath bowed her head,
Though she be old and he be young.
To answer him she hath no tongue—
He lashes her to yielding dread.

Even the air he binds and tames—
Its force to music can distil,
Or chain its currents to his will
In ways to come, that have no names.

Fire is his handmaid : though upstirred
And flamed with rebel passion strong,
Great though her strength, 'tis not for long
She holds her firm against his word.

Ay, Man is great ; his soul doth scorn
All weaker. He hath no regret.
His works are his, all his—and yet,
What if the sun rise not at morn ?

Enchantment

As when a flower holds my eyes enchain'd
By its impassioned beauty, so thy face
Holds me, beloved, till I have attained
Full knowledge of its grace ;

And all the muted music of thy breath,
Tone upon tone, the thirsty silence seems
To drink, while I to some narcotic death
Drift on in perfect dreams.

The Shrine

Dear, I have built in a wood
A shrine that is sacred to you,
And there would I dream if I could,
But there's duty to do.

Deep in the forest it stands,
Fragrant with balsam and pine,
Built not by arduous hands
But by fancy divine.

Out of its twilight your eyes
Look into mine, with a gaze
Eloquent, wistfully wise,
Of impossible days.

Yet, though my joy and my woe
Fade with the dimness of years,
Still to your shrine will I go
For my laughter, my tears.

The Surrender

And art thou come to live with me,
To live with me till time be done ?
To lead from subtle shadows
Out to the candid sun ?

Is it to teach me, thou art come,
How best to read Life's gentle book—
To turn its patient pages
Nor once beyond them look ?

To love me, and to make me love,
To give and take all gifts from me—
O Happiness, must I submit,
And laugh, and live with thee ?

The Answer

Tell me no more that once you loved me well,
For love is still immortal, and its day
Dies not in night, but at the evening bell
It flames anew, and drives the dusk away.

Nor tell me that you love me still despite
Some passing tribute to another heart.
For love demands the rapture to requite,
And asking all, disdains the lesser part.

Ah, speak no more of love not in your ken.
Love is a joy that first to lovers seems
Too subtle for reality, and then
Too real, too potent, too divine for—dreams.

The Departure

He is gone ; and the places that knew him and
loved him will know him no more ;
His step has withdrawn from the room, his pres-
ence has passed from the door.
No more in the garden he walks, blue of eye, white
of hair, red of cheek,
With that strange look of youth in his face, and a
glance that with fire seemed to speak.

Many years will the apple-trees bud, that he viewed
with affection and pride ;
Many years will the lilac-bush bloom, and the birds
on their nestlings abide.
And, though in beneficent rest they have laid him
awhile in the sod,
The soul that he spake from will live, for it echoed
the voice of his God.

Crisis

Out of her heart she was turned,
 Out into uttermost dark—
Chaos where knowledge had burned
 Faith to the very last spark,—
Out of her heart she was turned.

Strange ! For she thought life secure,
 Cherished and safe with its love.
How could she live and endure
 All that her destiny prove ?
Strange, for she thought love secure.

What was there left to be said,
 What to be hoped, to be done ?
Words that had stricken love dead
 Blazed on her flesh like a sun.
What was there left to be said ?

A Dying Butterfly

Here in my path it struggling lies,
 A small cloud made
To mar the crystal of my skies
 With piteous shade.

Lie in my palm, frail creature, so ;
 Still the vain beat
Of thy poor heart, whose currents flow
 So strangely fleet.

Ah, how it throbs ! With that last throe
 Of pain it dies.

Think, for a butterfly to know
 Such agonies !

How like a broken rainbow seems
 Thy hanging wing ;
Like the cleft promise of our dreams
 On wakening.

Thy pinions' colors mock my dole,
They are so fair :
'Twould seem almost thy brilliant soul
Were hovering there.

How mute, how pitiful the end
Of thy proud state !
Thou hadst not fallen so, fair friend,
Had I been fate.

Cannot proud Nature's power dare
Recall thy death ?
Or the whole universe of air
Spare thee a breath ?

Not one. Lie there upon the sod,
And that same hue
Will paint the summer flowers, as God
Has painted you.

Love-that-was

Whither away, O Love-that-was ?

 Turn back thy wandering feet,
And I will give thee coral red,
 And silver, and incense sweet.
I'll play thee tunes on a golden lyre,
 I'll bind thine exquisite hair
With bands of bloom, and ribbons of fire
 From banners that lovers bear.

“ Nay, nay,” said the lovely Love-that-was,

 “ I'll come to thee no more,
My shallop waits on the turning tide,
 My foot is off the shore.”
And wanly the whisper died away—
 “ I come no more to thee ;
I go to the land of rising day,
 To dawn on a laughing sea.”

Then fare thee well, dear Love-that-was,
Fare thee forever well ;
My heart is heavy in my breast,
My grief I fain would tell.
I was disdainful of thy kiss,
And I was foward and fine ;
But now my only pride is this,
That once I called thee mine.

Song of Cupid

I touch my ear to the earth to hear fair Proserpine
plead

“Hasten!” to spring a-coming,
Rise with the distant humming
Of rising sap in the forest, and odorous sighs on the
mead.

I met a wounded lover straying away to mope,
I bade him listen, and filled his foolish being with
hope.

A lover is delicate game!

I listen and hear the blood leap up in the veins of
a rose,
And see its petals blushing;
I hear the murmurous rushing
Of streams in the quiet heart of a valley wooing
repose.

"This is summer," say I, and on the season's
flow

I trace the secrets that only the heart of a lover
can know—

A lover is delicate game !

The trees are falling asleep, the sun is brown in the
west ;

"Ah me," the leaves are sighing,

"The gentle flowers are dying,

And we must lie with them on the mother's with-
ered breast!"

I left the leaves and flowers to mourn their life
away

And set a hopeless lover a-dancing as if 'twere
May—

A lover is delicate game !

Silent the moon's cold eyes look down on the placid
snow ;

The river, wrapt in sleeping,

Graved in the ice is keeping

Its heart, till spring shall brew her charms in the
caves below.

But seasons are one to me, and off to the chase
I go,

With a kiss to the solemn moon, and a pull at my
rusty bow—

A lover is delicate game.

The Chain

I was singing in the lane
On a day when Love came by,
And was fain
To elude him, but the pain
Of his pleading made me sigh—
So he bound me with a chain.

Who is Love, that he should be
Master of a passing maid,—
Who is he ?
When I met him I was free,
Now I tremble all afraid—
Lackaday, my liberty !

Pan and Echo

Echo, by Pan beloved, preferred to him
Narcissus, dawdling o'er the fountain's rim,
Where his own image, in the sweet flood drowned,
Filled him with joy and held him rapture-bound ;
While Echo, wistful, womanish, and weak,
Lingered, forlorn, nor dared his gaze bespeak.

The sun went up, the sun went down the sky,
The quiet moon smiled from her seat on high,
And still Narcissus, o'er the water fair,
Leaned from the edge to view his beauty there ;
Nor did he for a tender moment think
Of Echo, languishing so near the brink.

So days, so nights, into the past were borne,
When Echo saw Narcissus on a morn
Slip from his place, outworn with vanity,
And die, ere she could win his constancy.

With mournful moans upon the earth she lay,
Till all but her pure voice had pined away.

Pan, when he saw fond Echo heed him not,
Turned with his pipe and wandered from the spot,
And to another nymph he straightway ran,—
Which proves that, though a god, he still was man.
But Echo was a woman ; and when pride
Succumbed to love, and love was lost—she died.

The Musician

Music, my mother ! On thy mellow breast
I lie as a weak child, and darkling draw
Thy radiant life deep, deep into my own.
I know no further happiness than this—
Thou art the link betwixt me and my God.

And as I feel the vigor of thy veins
Enter to mine, warm and intoxicant,
There buds and blooms the flower of my soul,
Whose seed thy fruitful touch alone can quicken,
Whose life thy nurture only can sustain.

Then do I see strange visions of all life—
Primeval things so old that, almost, He
Who made them had forgot them : things not
now
To be imagined, palpable alone
To the soul's sentience, not its imagery.

Yea, I, the suckling, know maturity
A passing while : for one ecstatic space
Rise in the majesty of knowledge, live
The life of god-men, looking down at man
With eyes that weep and hearts that bleed for pity.

Then only do I feel God's purposes,
Soul-guarding, hunger-pricking—not the hunger
Furnished with jaws that ravens upon bread—
But hunger of the spirit, seeking food
It too shall share in God's eventual day.

*Ere Christ, the Flower of Virtue,
 Bloomed*

Ere Christ, the Flower of Virtue, bloomed,
 On Mary's breast the Blossom lay.

'Twas on a still and golden day,
 Some glamour not of earth was there,
When Mary knelt alone to pray
 That she the Child might worthy bear.

Her loving bosom heaving fast
 With pure emotion, soft she cried,
Nor saw the angel as he passed,
 Nor felt the angel at her side.

Awake ! Arise ! And oh, rejoice !
 For unto you a Lord is born.
Hear you the chanting Heaven-voice,
 The harp, and the resounding horn ?

The star moves on, the shepherds rise
From midnight vigil, solemn, still.
With crook upraised, with 'raptured eyes,
They follow over vale and hill.

They follow till the angel-star
Doth stay, and looking down they see
A humble shed where cattle are,
Wherein they enter curiously.

When lo, a Mother and a Child . . .
Pallid she lay, as lilies lie
Upon an altar. They, most mild,
Knelt down before the mystery.

About the Mother's youthful head,
About the Babe's, the golden ring
A glow ineffable did shed
Upon the shepherds, worshipping.

"What marvel," said they, "that our Lord
Doth come as humble-born as we,

As stark, as poor!" And they adored
And yearned for him unspeakably.

With joy they lingered at his feet,
Then to the waiting flocks returned;
But oh, the homeward way was sweet,
And their glad eyes with visions burned.

Thus came the King, divine and doomed,
Unto His own, and thus we say
Ere Christ, the Flower of Virtue, bloomed,
On Mary's breast the Blossom lay.

And for that she the tidings bright
Bore with a saint's humility,
So beautiful upon the height
Should woman's feet forever be.

*The Flowers are Dead, the Trees are
Bare*

The flowers are dead, the trees are bare,
The cock is still at morn ;
So frosty flows the winter air
He dare not wind his horn.
But though the time is cold, my love,
My heart is warm for thee ;
What sorrow can it hold, my love,
If thou be true to me,
If thou be true to me ?

The dead are frozen in the mold,
The rime is on the tomb ;
And blow it hot, or blow it cold,
They'll know the day of Doom.
But though the frost is low, my love,
My heart is warm for thee ;

What sorrow can it know, my love,
So thou be true to me,
So thou be true to me ?

I met my friend upon the heath,
I craved his favor high ;
But up his sword sprang from its sheath,
And anger from his eye.
What though a friend forgets, my love,
My heart remembers thee,
And cannot fear nor fret, my love,
While thou art true to me,
While thou art true to me !

Love's Attributes

I am what love doth think me ; if it be
Fair, I am fair, with cheeks where blushes fly
At thought of being fair in love's decree,
And eyes that sparkle deeper when they spy
Their brightest image in another's eye.

If love be joy, I am too fully blessed ;
If love be pain, I am o'er-cursed for sins ;
And which it is I know not, for they be
So intermingled that, I pray of thee
Canst tell me where joy ends or pain begins ?

Hast thou not followed in a master's song,
A passing strain that seemed from heaven to
float ;
Hast thou not lost and sought it with a strong
Desire, and found it chained with some low
note

That stole one-half its gladness, and returned
A half of pain, till each from each had learned
 The beauty and the burden of the song—
Then in the falling silence, didst thou know
Which gave thee rapture or which gave thee woe ?

A Portrait

She leans in pensive ease upon her chair,
One hand upon its arm, the other laid
Loosely upon her lap, whence modest folds
Of some soft fabric mantle to the floor.
Against the stern, dark, melancholy wood
Her form is gracious, with appealing curves
And pliant restfulness. Above, her hair,
From the white forehead parted, gently waves
In pleasing undulation, over eyes
Sea-gray, and tender with the mother-light,
Though none may call her mother: and the
lips

Poise in the delicate smile of musing love.

One needs must know the breath that parts them
thus

Is purely fragrant as the air that wraps
The purple firstlings of the violet-flock,

When the prompt sun, their shepherd, calls them
forth.

Ah ! would we might be always near such
lips,

To learn from them the secret of the heart
Where happiness and virtue are as one !

Ariadne

Ariadne! Ariadne!
On the sunny lea I sought her,
Traced her footsteps by the water,
Followed them through grove and meadow,
Calling in the forest shadow,
“Ariadne! Ariadne!”

Gray at even grew the air ;
Red behind the fire-edged mountains
Dropped the tired sun ; the fountains
Of the sea flowed dim, and weary
Fell the bird into its eerie
Nest to dream, and night was there.

While my soul lay wrapt in vision,—
I of Ariadne dreaming.—
All that is was lost in seeming,

All that seemed was more than real,
With the joy that dreams may feel,
With an ecstasy Elysian.

But the morrow came and found me
Restless, searching for the dream,
Lost, as are the things that seem,—
When a sudden turning showed
Naiads, where a runlet flowed,
Grouped in loveliness around me.

Startled into sudden hoping,
Thinking Ariadne nearer—
She than all the great world dearer—
Quickly did I scan each face,
But in none her own could trace ;
And my spirit sank a-moping.

Glad because my joy was brief,
Happy that my hope seemed dead,
Then they closer drew them to me,

With their arms to bind and woo me,
Smiled upon me, captive led.
But my soul turned faint with longing,
For, though beauty rare is thronging,
Love, unloving, still must see
 Only happiness in grief.

So they ceased ; with arms outlaid,
Songs of banter rudely singing,
Laughter from their lips came swinging,—
And before me, silent, white,
Stood the hope of my delight,
 Ariadne, goddess-maid.

Then I clasped her with a bliss
That with keenness stung my heart.
“ Nevermore,” I cried, “ to part,
Mystic maiden bride of light !”
Scarce had fed my starvèd sight,
Scarce I held her, when I felt
All her clinging softness melt,
Part from me as day from night,

Leave me empty, wond'ring there.
And the unimpressèd air
Mocking, wafted back my kiss.

• • • • • •

Ariadne! Ariadne!

Change

Fair Muriel, upon a steed
Milk-white, and girt with silver bells,
Rode through the land at merry speed,
By lanes and dingles, vales and dells ;
The tinkle gay her coming tells,
And through the leaves her face I spy,
Bright as a blossom on the fells,
A star in a murky sky.

At evening when the sun had fled,
I saw fair Muriel, faint and worn.
So wearily her palfrey tread
The bells were of their music shorn.
His maiden-burden drooped forlorn,
And in her eyes no sparkle gleamed.
Is this the vision of the morn,
Or was it that I dreamed ?

The Love-Letter

Naught but an old love-letter,
Broken at all the creases
Where, with his trembling fingers,
Swiftly he bent and pressed it,—
Not in a past so distant
But that the breast heaves gently
At a remembered heart-beat
In a lost spring-time throbbing.

Read it. . . . The same endearments,—
Only the same worn phrases
Lovers have used unceasing
Back to the times forgotten.
Yet, when they sprang to being
There from the eager quill-point,
Leapt from the large desire
Into the narrow billet,
As the gigantic genie

Sank in his bottle-prison,
Fresh to the lover's thinking
Echoed their wondrous meaning,
Fresh as the dew baptismal
Poured by enraptured Nature
Over her first-born flower.

Chagrin d'Amour

When I am with you, laughter and the guise
Of banter hide the secret from your eyes—
Your eyes that bound for me the joy of earth—
That, so, in the noonlight of a childish mirth,
I may conceal the spirit's mysteries.

But when a space divides us, if it be
A singing brook, or broad, deep-sighing sea,
My soul goes forth, no longer to repine,
And in a rapture psychic and divine,
Takes at your side its own God-given place.

Confessional

Lord, here's my soul, all sin-bestrewn.

 Lord, 'tis thine ; thou knewest best
 That it could not keep in tune
 With the rhythm of thy behest,
 That its discord all too soon
 At thy feet would be confessed.

Life's for that, so let it be ;
 In the fire the metal's tried.
Yet I never feared to see
 My firm armor laid aside,
Till a sword-thrust wounded me
 In my youth-enamoured pride.

So, O Lord, take this, and this,—
 Here my vanity I lay,

There my sacrilege: I wis
'Tis a heavy price I pay . . .
For I thought, " Though others miss,
I can never miss the way."

Love's Crescendo

If that thou lovest me for what I am—
With thought of nothing better, nothing worse—
I love thee for the lover that thou art.

If that thou lovest me for that ideal
I would be—aiding with the friendly word,
Hand-pressure from the heart and equal strife
To reach beyond—I love thee for my soul's
Eternal mate in worlds and times to come.

If loving me in way of earth-content,
While in a battle of the world we strove,
I, loving thee the same, would die for thee.

But loving thee as reaching soul loves soul
That struggles with it towards the battle's bound,
If thou shouldst fall, and vanish 'mid the swords,
I would not die, but I would live for thee.

The Passing of Daphne

*Daphne, the beautiful, whom life had crowned,
Dreamed in her bower and thus her musing ran:*

One random glance, caught in the mirror there,
And truth is here—I, too, am growing old.
I knew no woman might be always fair,
And that the fire of youth some day grows
cold,—
That admiration, once so kind a friend,
Must one day pass and say, “This is the end.”

Do flowers regret their petals as they fade,
And lose their tender beauty with a sigh ?
Do butterflies lie weeping in the shade
To see their hope, the light of day, pass by ?
Or birds sing sadly with a lingering breath
The song that mourns a summer and their death ?

Ah, if they do, poor birds and butterflies,
My heart goes out to them, for I too grieve.
Farewell, dear golden locks, farewell sweet eyes,—
Lithe step and merry spirits, take your leave
With fleeting noons of triumph, moonlit nights
Of joyous reverie and young delights !

For woman's beauty perishes like these,
One moment glorious and the next destroyed
By pitiless time, and all her vanities
Turned empty-handed back into the void
Where throng the ghosts of beauty perished long,
Forgot save in a history or song.

'Tis not alone to watch the glory drift
From hair that once was spun of fairy gold ;
To see the wrinkle in a brow—the rift
Through which most madly rush the curses old,
Weakness and weariness—to see bright eyes
Lose the vague charm of youth's divine surprise,—

Not these alone, but more than all the rest,
Than clouded glance, or slowly paling cheek,
A haunting sorrow, to my soul confessed,
Disarms my strength and leaves my spirit meek—
That as this once proud beauty fades away
Men pay no homage : 'tis of yesterday.

Euterpe at a Modern Concert

Poor souls, that strive to speak the overword !
See, they have taken strands from out a beast
And strung them bravely till the sound increased
To stranger tones the old gods never heard.

And they have fashioned instruments of brass
To hold, forsooth, the poetry of the breeze,
The formless whisper of the forest trees,
Or blasts untamable of Boreas ;

To changeling forms have wrought the pipes of Pan
That erst were amply eloquent for praise
Of brook or flower in far Arcadian days,
But now must needs dissect the soul of man.

So have they gathered closely with these things,
Ranged long in proper rows, and garnished bright
In prim attire ; and lo, in sudden affright
Music hath fled upon far-trembling wings !

Of Love

What is it—this I call my love for thee ?
'Tis like the eternal murmur of the sea ;
And like the omnipresent air, whose free,
Unfettered, endless flow is life to me.

Thy love is like a wind,
That bloweth happiness,
To rage or to caress ;
Thy love is like a wind,
That bloweth happiness.

And thy love and my love are what ?
A drop in the love of eternity,
That God by His might, and we by our
right can see,
And the blind world seeth not.

The Long Quest

Summer sun and summer sky, and all the world
a-beaming,

Bud and bloom, and song of birds chanting ever
higher;

But within the garden close the summer wind is
dreaming,

Dreaming of a golden day, its own Heart's Desire.

Soon the sun will softly fade, birds will find their
slumber,

Buds will bloom and blossoms burn into pas-
sionate fire,

But the wistful wind will seek summers without
number,

Sigh and seek and never find its own Heart's
Desire.

The Maiden in the Tropics

I am happy, I am free,
My heart laughs with the summer,
Laughs with the blue, blue sky,
And with the bounding sea.
The palms are like my mother,
Who broods and bends o'er me ;
The vines are like the children
That 'round me naked climb ;
The flowers are like my thoughts,
That grow so near together
And blossom all the time.
The mountain, dark and long,
Is standing like my father
To keep away all wrong.
Then, in the night so damp,
The moon hangs like a lamp,
Shining yellow-white and pale
On the bush across the trail

Where the baboons bark and play
Till the dawning of the day.
And at evening come the words
Of the punctual hour-birds,
Warning of the passing time
In a shrill, discordant chime ;
While the parrots, calling harsh,
Flying, paired, across the marsh,
Are messengers to me
From my fire-hearted lover
In the islands of the bay,
So far, so far away.

In Autumn

The wind blows coldly on the pane,
The leaves fall dismally without,
And mingle with the autumn rain
That, melancholy, drips about.
Heigh-ho, there's nothing I can say
But "Dear, come back!" when Spring's away.

The Ideal

I cannot paint you,—only, as I see
Majestic mountains something stirs my soul
To thinking of you, till my eyes are filled
With unbid tears. Some fierce, wild disarray,
Some thunder of the north wind speaks of you,
And, too, some restless murmur of the sea,
And that same sea's ambition at high tide
To cover all the land, or beat in wrath
Fearless against the barricade of rocks.
These things are you when they have filtered through
My understanding soul, but without that
They are but hills and wind and sea and rocks
To him who sees, but never can see you.

The Flower

I saw it through the forest green
Upon a trembling tree,—
Now what is this that hath a sheen
Like jewels in the hair
Of fleeing dryads, passing fair ?

It is the enchanted Bloom of Love.
Come not too near, too near,
Nor seek the magic flower to move,
For in your grasp it must
But fade and fall to eerie dust.

Isolde Waits

Hasten, my Tristan ! Strange he dallies so !
The signal's given, yet he is not here.
Tristan ! my arms are empty, and my heart
Hungry as any bird upon the snow :
Let me not hunger lest my strength do fail.
Strange, strange he comes not ! Oh, he loves me
less
Than I love him—his soul has other joys,
The chase, the tourney, all rare knightly deeds,
While I have only one, alas ! his love.
Tristan, for such a love wilt thou not come ?

He does not know. He thinks me cold at whiles,
Proud and imperial. I have seen a shade
Temper his brow when at some sudden word
He spurned the seeming mastery of my will,
As if my soul could master such as his.
He dreams not I could kneel there at his feet,

Kiss his dear hand, and be his worshipping slave,
Content that he might order all my life
If in return his single heart were mine.

It must be mine—yet why does he delay ?
Tristan ! How dark the threatening forest seems,
Armed with sharp shadows like a menacing host.
Could harm have 'fallen him? O gods, avert
Each danger from his path—bring him safe here
Into my yearning arms—hark, hark, a step,
It nears, 'tis his—Tristan ! my love, my love !

The Revolt

After Liszt's "Second Rhapsody"

(To M. B. B.)

I

Heavy with sullen fear he moved with a stealthy
tread,
And the rain-dank sod gave form to his steps,
and from under his brows,
Black as the heart of a storm at midnight, his glance
was shed
Furtively there and here; and before him the night-
birds fled
From their unseen boughs.

Grinding his passions fine in the mill of his half-
mad soul,
He crept, the peasant who knew but one black
fact of it all:

He was the victim ; they, the rich, the crafty, they
stole

His rights; they had trod on his heart as one might
tread on a mole
In one foot-fall.

" God, where is He, and why, who leaves his people
to writhe

Under the devil's rule ? for the poor are his peo-
ple, clear ;

The rich are the devil's, and God should give to
them not a tithe

Of the joys of heaven, they who revel in heaven
here.

" Curse them, curse them, curse them !" His fury
rose in his throat,

And he choked it back with his hands, and choked
it back with his will ;

And his plodding step went on, till down in the
shades remote

He sank with hunger, and slept, and his stormy
soul was still.

II

The lords and ladies have come to see
The peasants at work in the meadow ;
They are quaffing wine, and many there be
Who know no stress nor shadow.

The reapers ply with a sullen eye,
With sweat their arms are dripping ;
They hear the glass as they reap and pass,
And the pages lightly tripping.

The laughter smites their work-worn ears
Like the stinging of a nettle.
“ Work ! ” cries their lord, midst merry cheers ;
“ Work ! each man on his mettle ! ”

The dark-browed peasants lower bend,
The lashing whip falls o'er them ;
One looks at his knife, and one at his friend,
Then all at the lords before them.

No tiger sprang with a fiercer roar
As he cleft his prey asunder ;
The ground is ruddy, and all is o'er,—
Then ho, for the wine and plunder !

III

The deed is done and the slaves have won,
And the masters lie all dead in the sun ;
And the wine has risen to dullard brains,
Till eyes gleam blood and madness reigns.

And faster and faster rings the shout
And the peal of laughter from every lout,
As they trample the grain in ecstasy
That the food of tyrants it ne'er can be.

Madder, madder the voices rise
To echo back from the unmoved skies ;
And fiercer the dance, in the first surprise
Of unknown freedom and undreamed bliss ;
“ And the rich, have they always glowed like this,

With fire coursing through every vein ?
Then God has come to His poor again !"

And high in Heaven their God looked down
On poor, on rich, with His equal frown.

The Rose of St. Francis

St. Francis of Assisi

Sate in the cloister gloom
Scanning his holy missal,
To save him from the doom
Of sin, forever rising
As dead rise from the tomb.

With long-imprisoned fire
His heart burned hot within ;
To other souls' temptation
His own was nigh akin—
He that so oft had conquered
The spirit of all sin.

His throbbing head bent lower
Above the scripture page ;
He read with yearning spirit
The word of Lord and sage,

Yet over all his being
Crept Fear like palsied age.

The hands that held the missal
Were trembling, as a leaf
Shakes in autumnal forests,—
Ay, in their sombre sheaf
His very arms a-shiver
Bespoke his passionate grief.

“O Lord of all,” he murmured,
“Have pity on Thy child!
Turn from Thy saints and angels
Secure in virtue mild,
And lean in heavenly mercy
To one by sin defiled.

“Have not long days of hunger
And thirst, and pain of years
Sufficed to turn forever
The threat of human fears—

O Lord, O Lord, remember
My scourging and my tears!"

He bowed his head despairing,
With bitterness he wept
To face sin's awful visage
The while his brethren slept;
All night he moaned and wrestled,
All night the tryst he kept.

Yet still the Horror pressed him,
Nearer Temptation came—
The beads upon his forehead
Bespoke, with silent shame,
His struggle and his terror,—
He called his Master's name—

He rushed from cloistral shadows
Out to the dawning day,
And on the thornèd brambles,
That stung like swords at bay,

He flung his wasted body,
And worn and bleeding lay.

O gracious pain of body
That soothed the deeper woe
Of his poor soul in travail,—
O heavenly Voice, so low,
So pitiful, so loving,
That only sinners know !

His blood upon the brambles
Bestowed its crimson tide,
And on the thorns beneath him
His bitter tears were dried,
While to the Lord triumphant
His easèd soul outcried.

And since that blessed morning
Whereon he was reborn,
There grew among the brambles
That his poor flesh had torn,

A rose whose tender beauty
Showed not a single thorn.

St. Francis' Rose they call it
Who pray beside it, there
Within Assisi's garden
So tranquil and so fair;
And for that he has conquered,
The richer hope they bear.

Youth

Lyrical are the trees
Blossoming all together,
Vocal the day with bees,
Birds, and the breezy weather;
Happiness keen as pain
Lilts in the ringing rain,
Drips in the showery trees,
Lispings together.

Lyrical, too, art thou,
Blossom of living beauty,
Rapture upon thy brow,
Joyousness all thy duty.
Sorrow may woo in vain—
Seek thee in sun or rain—
Stab her with laughter now,
Slay her with beauty !

When Betsy Comes Down-Town

(To E. M.)

When Betsy comes down-town,
From her remote suburban lair,
There seems to blow a brighter air;
The grimy streets seem debonair
For touching of her gown;
And under muslin frills her feet,
As tiny and as silvery fleet
As some gazelle's, go tapping sweet
When Betsy comes down-town

When Betsy comes down-town,
The musty volumes mountain-high,
The shelves where dust and papers lie,
Seem ill to suit a butterfly

Fresh from the meadow brown,—
But when she goes a lingering light,
Reflection from the vision bright,
Makes everything divinely right
That seemed askew down-town.

My Grandame's Gown

With lavender bestrewn
 You send my fancy straying,
As to a ghostly tune
 Of distant viols playing,
Because, fair garment, kept
 Within your linen cover,
In you my grandame stepped
 A measure with her lover.

In clouds of quaint old lace,
 Whose hue Time's touch has yellowed,
You have the royal grace
 Of grandeur softly mellowed.
How beat her heart apace
 To hear your silken rushes ;
How must her mirrored face
 Have bloomed with conscious blushes !

How youthful was the smile
Beneath the stately powder ;
How did the patch beguile
Which vanity allowed her !
Lace-hid, her snowy breast
Heaved with a shy elation,
When fancy bravely guessed
A lover's admiration.

O slender, oval waist,
Where soon his arm might linger ;
O gentle hand that graced
His ring upon its finger ;
O slipper tapping swift,
O eyes so eager glancing,
Impatient soon to drift
. In music to the dancing !

Ah, many years have passed,
And many loves have perished ;
Yet this frail gown at last
Lies here, unharmed and cherished.

They say I look like her :
He begged of me to wear it,
But, somehow, I prefer
No other maid should share it.

Her sweetheart viewed it o'er ;—
With roses on their faces,
He dared to stoop before
And kiss the trembling laces.
Nay, stay, sweet memory, laid
Safe in your linen cover,
Sacred to one fond maid,
And one true-hearted lover.

Bowling Green, New York

Where the city's rushing throng
Beats its burly way along
Whitehall Street,
Up where giant buildings frown
On the pygmy people, down
At their feet,

Lies a modest bit of park
That the people seldom mark
In their haste,
As they scatter to and fro,
And like winds of heaven go,
Fury-paced.

But within this green enclosed,—
Where the burghers once repos'd
At their ease,

Or at bowls displayed their skill
Summer afternoons to kill,

If you please—

Reigns some magic of the past
That, amid the noisy blast

All around,

Sets a charm upon your ear
As you enter, and you hear
Not a sound;

Not a murmur, save the tone
Of a Dutchman, or the drone
Of a bee;

Or the laughter of a child
As he scampers free and wild
On the lea.

You can see the Maying-time,
When the maiden's voices chime

Joyous notes;

When the Neltjes and the rest
Are arrayed in all their best
Petticoats.

And they dance with such a grace,
And they blush with such a face—
 Rose-and-cream—
As they curtsy, sweet and shy,
That you wonder why you sigh
 As you dream.

For they've vanished long ago,
Burgher, goede vrouw and beau,
 Damsel fair;
And the smile that meets your eye,
And the steps that patter by
 Are but air.

Yet, 'tis said that every night
When the moon is shining bright
 On the scene,
Still the Dutchmen's placid souls
Play their solemn game of bowls
 On the Green.

Maiden Lane, New York

(1624-1905)

Down Maiden Lane, where clover grew,
Sweet-scented in the early air,
Where sparkling rills went shining through
Their grassy banks, so green, so fair,
Blithe little maids from Holland land
Went tripping, laughing each to each,
To bathe the flax, or spread a band
Of linen in the sun to bleach.

More than two centuries ago
They wore this path—a maiden's lane—
Where now such waves of commerce flow
As never dazed a burgher's brain.
Two hundred years ago and more
Those thrifty damsels, one by one,
With plump, round arms their linen bore
To dry in Mana-ha-ta's sun.

But now ! Behold the altered view ;
No tender sward, no bubbling stream,
No laughter,—was it really true,
Or but the fancy of a dream ?
Were these harsh walls a byway sweet,
This floor of stone a grassy plain ?
Pray vanish, modern city street,
And let us stroll down Maiden Lane !

What's the News?

Oh, fold up the morning paper—
Who cares for the news of town ?
But—what are the violets doing ?
Has the jonquil made her gown
To wear through the gay spring hours
So mindful of her looks ?
Come, give me news of the flowers,
The grass, and the trees and brooks !

Last night, when the diva was flinging
Those notes of hers to the air,
I thought, will the thrush be singing
To-morrow, and I not there ?
Are the daffodils all making
Their rows of yellow shoon ?—
Till the singer's voice seemed breaking,
And the viols were out of tune.

So fold up the tiresome paper,
With old monotonous talk
Of routs and riots and races,
And let's go out for a walk.
What is it the buds are doing
Deep down in the secret stem,
That even with music wooing
I think and I think of them ?

Solitude at Anthony Pond

(To M. H. H.)

I

Would I might speak with tongues of more than
men

To tell the beauty of a quiet glen

Where timid birches cluster, each a maid

White-robed and slender, waiting half afraid

For what portentous hours may produce.

Would I might paint the hemlock and the spruce,

Glooming disdainful of the birches' fear

By that pure, ardent lake, where the red deer

Feed on the margin, sweet with fragrance brief

And dainty succulence of lily-leaf.

Here roams the fawn, unfrighted and alone,

Free as the breeze, pine-scented, and far flown

From mountain-sides ; and here the buck and roe,

Grazing or drinking from the quiet flow,

Share with the lake its wild, bright purity.

Oh, fairer than man's fairest work to see
Is this true realm of silence and delight,
Of spicy scents, all flooded o'er with bright
Glory of summer skies. So lucent seems
This little lake of loveliness and dreams,
That clouds lie feathery light within its breast,
And all its polished stones are jewels dressed
By lapidaries to a sumptuous sheen
That adds an Asian richness to the scene ;
While in and out glimmers the luring dye
Of racing trout in full-gemmed panoply.
Here, too, the heron blue, in lonely state,
Crosses the reeds with flight deliberate,
And lighting slowly on his log-made throne
Stands motionless, and kingly, and alone.
Nor lovelier land might any king desire,
For where could freer burn the holy fire
Of wisdom pure and aspiration high
Than in so calm a spot and under such a sky !

Anthony Pond in Winter

II

Thy beauty in remembrance wrings my heart.
Thou art more fair than ever women were,
Though their proud fame were blazoned in all art.
And when I think of Winter's cruel hand
Laid hard upon thee, and thy beauty dim
And frozen in his grasp, where all the land
Lies pale and silent in the fear of him,
My soul rebels, and I implore for thee
A miracle ! That 'midst the snow there be
A magic circle drawn about thy form—
That all the trees upon thy lovely marge
Be left forever green, forever fair ;
That thy soft, serious waters ever bear
Beneath perpetual summer, spicy-warm,
The vision of an Orient monarch's barge
Slow floating gently through enchanted days.

Then may the timorous, frost-affrighted deer
Steal silent to thy rim, released from fear,
To nibble at its will the celandine
And lily-pads. There may the hungry fox
And shuddering squirrel come on thy delight
Miraculous from out the frozen night ;
And in their wake may all wild creatures roam,
That shiver by the icy birch and pine,
And come into thy summer as to home,—
So mayst thou bless them, lovely lake of mine !

Unexpressed

He had words or smiles for them all,
His friends, his foes and—the rest ;
But for one that he loved, no word,
No smile, not a cool hand pressed,
Nor a sigh : but an empty jest.

Yet there at the hearth of his heart
The fire burned, warm and wide,
While the welcome upon his lips,
For the guest who did not abide,
Stammered and sobbed and died.

The Dead Love

The sun upon the evening way,
It burned a dismal red,
As on the road where shadows lay,
A ghostly woman sped.
“ It wounded me by night and day
Ere it would die,” she said.

Within her arms a dead Love lay,
Close nestled as in sleep ;
She held it in a mother-way,
Yet silence could not keep,—
“ It wounded me,” she oft would say,
“ Ere death its soul did reap.”

Yea, on her breast so smooth and white,
Like red wine on the snow,
The wound had gaped upon the night ;
She had not seemed to know,

But when the morning came with light
She looked, and it was so.

Far, far upon the shadow-road,
'Mid shapes all thin and stark,
The wound upon her breast it glowed
Like to a dying spark
That fades upon its last abode,
And melts into the dark.

The Night of Rain

One night of rain I left my bed
And in the storm I strode ;
The rain it fell until my feet
Went sip-sop in the road.

But soon I saw the winking light
Of goodman Nuggin's inn,
And well I knew the fire was bright,
The wood high in the bin.

Ho, I will cast the dice, quoth I,
And I will drink my fill,
And the storm will stop ere I shall try
My strength against its will.

Yet even as I spoke, a Thing
Walked blackly at my side,

And fanned my face with batlike wing,
And laughed with gloating pride.

Then, though I saw old Nuggin's light,
I turned me back and stayed
Safe in my bed that tempted night,
And cursed a while—and prayed.

Evening

(To G. I. S.)

The sun's long hour of passion has ta'en flight,
The wind is sleeping, and the drowsy flowers
Droop softly. All the little petulant showers,
That fret the earth with bitter-sweet delight,
Have fled before the Night's approaching train
In swiftly vanished bubbles of bright rain.

A blur of green and gray the meadow lies,
And the dim patch of woodland, where is heard
The tender call of a remonstrant bird—
As if she cried to the far Mysteries
To keep her brooding nest, where younglings lay,
Serene and safe until the coming day.

Another wistful sound is in the air
Here where the brook has dallied all day long.
Now in the vesper changes of its song

It has embodied, too, a patient prayer,
And its mute rocks are altars whence to raise
The old rich choral of its evening praise.

Mayhap on yonder distant evening star
Is heard the hymning of this humble stream,—
The bird's appealing murmur in her dream
Is carried by the friendly ether far
From realm to realm, to join the mighty cry
Of all created things to God on high.

How quiet is the air ! What spirit hath
Hidden within the shadows, that my feet
Pause in half-fright at what I next may
meet
Around the turning of the misty path,—
Some genie of the evening on his round,
Treading before me guiltless of a sound ?

Or some sad wanderer seeking here surcease
From life's vexation, lifting up his heart
Until of Evening he becomes a part,

Lost in its primal wonder and its peace.
Ah, may he feel God's hand upon his brow
Blessing and cheering him—as I do now.





PS Sill, Louise Morgan
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